THE MYTHOLOGY OF DEATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

John Barclay Burns

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
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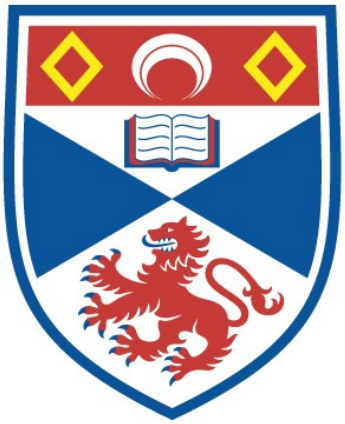

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THE MYTHOLOGY OF DEATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A THESIS BY

JOHN BARCLAY BURNS, M.A., B.D.

PRESENTED TO

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

The research was carried out by me in St. Mary's College, the University of St. Andrews between 1967 and 1970.

Date: 11th September 1970 Signature: _____

I certify that John Barclay Burns has spent nine terms in research at St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance/Court Resolution and that he is qualified to submit the following thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Professor of Helicon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By far the greatest debt of gratitude is due to my supervisor the Revd. Professor William McKane of St. Mary's College. It was under his guidance at the University of Glasgow that I first began to be interested in the Old Testament. No prospective Old Testament scholar could have had a more stimulating and painstaking teacher. Throughout the period of research for this thesis he has shown unflagging enthusiasm for the subject and unwearied patience in answering the endless flood of questions which were put to him. His keen eye has spotted many misinterpretations and he has often prevented me from doing grave injustice to the thought and language of the Old Testament. I have tried to be "attentive to his wisdom" and to "incline my thoughts to his understanding," for without him this work could never have been written.

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It is not customary, as far as I am aware, to dedicate a thesis. However, owing to certain personal circumstances, I wish to be permitted to dedicate this work to my beloved parents who have, throughout my university career, ensured that I might study in comfort, free from worry of any kind. To them I owe more than I can ever repay.

"Let your father and mother be glad,
let her who bore you rejoice."

(Prov. 23.25)

ABBREVIATIONS

AJSL The American Journal of Semitic Languages (Chicago)

ANEP The Ancient Near East in Pictures (ed. J.B. Pritchard; Princeton, 1965)

ANET Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (ed. J.B. Pritchard; Princeton (1) 1950 and (2) 1955).

AT Altes Testament

BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.

BDB A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament; (F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs; Oxford, 1966).

BWL Babylonian Wisdom Literature W.J. Lambert, (Oxford, 1960).

CAD The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (1956 seq.).

CML Canaanite Myths and Legends (G.R. Driver; Edinburgh, 1956)

DATD Das Alte Testament Deutsch (Göttingen).

IB The Interpreters Bible (Nashville, 1956),

ICC The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh),

JB The Jerusalem Bible

JBL The Journal of Biblical Literature (Philadelphia),

JNES The Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago)

K-B Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner; Leiden, 1958 2nd ed.).

3rd ed. א — תיו , B. Hartmann, E.Y. Kutsch, Leiden, 1967),

MT Massoretic Text

NEB The New English Bible

PEQ The Palestinian Exploration Quarterly (London),

RB Revue Biblique (Paris)

RHR Revue de l'histoire des Religions.

RSV The revised Standard Version.

TZ Theologische Zeitschrift

UT Ugaritic Textbook (C.H. Gordon; Rome, 1965),

VT Vetus Testamentum (Leiden)

WC The Westminster Commentary

ZATW Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin)

SUMMARY

The Preface examines the concept of life in the Old Testament which is discovered to be centred firmly on this world; special reference is made to life in the Wisdom Literature. Death at the end of a long and full life was accepted with resignation. Despite the paucity of references to death and the underworld in the Old Testament, there are passages which contain references to the mythology of death.

The first chapter provides a background by reviewing the relevant aspects of the mythology of death in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan. Chapter 2 lists the names for the underworld in the Old Testament and considers the mythological allusions which contain references to the location and characteristics of the underworld.

Chapter 3 discusses the dwellers in the underworld. The words rp'um in the Ugaritic texts and rp'm in Phoenician inscriptions are surveyed as a background to rephaim in the Old Testament. The practices of necromancy and tomb-offerings are considered and it is concluded that while popular practice condoned them, official religion condemned them. In the fourth chapter the relation between the world ocean and the nether world is set out. As in the rest of the Ancient Near East the underworld was represented as lying in the depths of the ocean at the foot of the pillars which supported the earth. The deceased had to traverse this ocean on his way to the underworld.

Chapter 5 deals with the concept of Sheol as a monster with gaping jaws and an insatiable appetite. This figure owes its ultimate origin to the Ugaritic god of death, Mot, whose ravenous appetite was proverbial. The sixth chapter surveys the personifications of death as a hunter, a shepherd and a robber. The powers of the underworld such as Abaddon, Sheol, Death the King of Terrors and the First-born of Death are discussed.

In conclusion, it is observed that the mythological allusions are fragmented and moribund, serving, for the most part, a literary purpose within the context of the Old Testament. Death was an experience which meant the cessation of all life.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Where there is no life there cannot be death, nor any mythology of death. Thus it is necessary at the outset of this thesis, which purports to examine the mythology of death in the Old Testament, to say something, however brief, about life.

For the average man in the world of the Ancient Near East a this-worldly concept of abundant life was the summum bonum. Death was regarded with the greatest apprehension and all mankind dreaded its advent. Perhaps an exception must be made in the case of Egypt, where there was a hope of a happy hereafter; but it will be shown below that the Egyptian, like his fellows elsewhere in the Fertile Crescent, entertained a natural dislike of the thought of death and clung to the good life. In a milieu where death came frequently through lack of simple hygiene, plague, famine and war; in a world where infant mortality was high and the life expectancy low, men prayed constantly to their gods that they might be given life, not mere existence, however, but life which was long, full and blessed by many children who would render the deceased due honour, that his spirit might be at rest in the underworld. Only the gods lived for ever, man did not expect to, for this was not part of the created order, but a long and happy life was of paramount importance.

EGYPT

Life in the Two Lands of Upper and Lower Egypt was seen to be the gift of the gods. They ruled over life and death and they were able to prolong or curtail the life of any man or woman as they so wished. These gods had created the land and fashioned mankind, giving life to those who inhabited Egypt. While it may seem to the superficial observer of Ancient Egyptian culture that the Egyptians were preoccupied with death. they were, notwithstanding, very fond of the good life and the good things of life. All their preparations for death were made with the intention

of securing "life for ever" in the next world; this life would be granted by the gods to the just. Indeed the state of the blessed in the Egyptian hereafter was a replica of daily life in earthly Egypt, without the drawbacks.

It has to be pointed out, as J.A. Wilson has demonstrated, that in the Old Kingdom (c. 2700 - 2185 B.C.) life in the world beyond was a privilege reserved for the pharaoh alone. From the IVth Dynasty onwards (c. 2500 B.C.) towards the end of the period the immediate royal family and the nobles needed to serve the king in the next world were also granted eternal life. They built their mastabas (tombs) round the pyramid of the pharaoh[1]. The Pyramid Texts, however, were intended solely for the benefit of the pharaoh. Further the dominant mood of the Old Kingdom was one of self-assurance, optimism, a love of life and a flat determination to continue this same life after death. Wilson says, "As long as that gay and assured relish of daily life continued in the land, the Egyptians lived intensely in the present, made grateful but brief gestures to the past and denied the future by projecting the present into the future."[2] I presume he means the unpleasant aspects of the future.

Though a less buoyant mood prevailed in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2050 B.C. - 1792 B.C.) and in the New Kingdom (c. 1465 B.C. - 1090 B.C.) life was still highly prized. In a New Kingdom hymn to Amun-Re, the chief god of Thebes, these lines are found:

> "Thou art the Sole One, who made all that is, the One and Only, who made what existeth. Men issued from his two eyes, and from his mouth the gods came into being."[3]

A XIXth Dynasty hymn (c. 1308 B.C. - 1190 B.C.) to the same deity, Amun-Re, contains the following statement about the power of the god to heal the sick, i.e. to restore to fullness of life, to rescue from the underworld, to prolong or shorten life:

"He (Amun-Re) who purgeth away evil and dispelleth sickness, the physician who healeth the eye without remedy, who openeth the eyes and banisheth the squint ..... who rescueth whom he will, though he be in the nether world; who saveth from fate to the full of his desire.
He possesseth eyes and ears likewise, wherever he goeth, for him whom he loveth, that he may hear the petitions of him that calleth to him. Coming from afar in the completion of an instant to him that calleth upon him. He prolongeth life and he shorteneth it also. He giveth to him whom he loveth more than is decreed to him (i.e. longer than fate has decreed)."[4]

In the El-Amarna 'Hymn to the Sun' dating from the reign of the heretical, at least by Egyptian standards, Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) (c. 1380 B.C.), the life-giving qualities of the Aten, the sun-disk, are emphasised:

"Beautiful is thine appearing on the horizon of heaven, thou living sun, that ordaineth life."[5]

The hymn praises the sun for dispelling darkness, for ordering all creation and sustaining it. The sun is the source of all created life, not only in Egypt, for he gives a "Nile in the Sky" to those outside Egypt. Finally in a letter from a pupil to his teacher in a temple school, again from the New Kingdom, the pupil prays to Amun to give his master long life:

"May Amun afford thee joy in thine heart, may he grant thee a good old age, that thou mayest pass a happy life, until thou attainest honour. Thy lip is in health, thy limbs flourish, thine eye seeth afar."[6]

The Egyptian word for life was ʿankh ☥ (𓈖 = n, 𓎛 = ḥ/kh).[7] The ʿankh, was the symbol of life and was invariably borne by all divinities on their representations. They carried this symbol to remind men continually that they alone possessed the gift of life and the power to grant it. A tomb painting from the tomb of Queen Hatshepsut (c. 1490 - 1468 B.C.) shows the ibis-headed Thoth, a moon-god and god of wisdom and the scribal arts, pouring a libation of water of life over the queen (her figure is erased). The water of life is represented by a stream of ʿankh-symbols pouring in an arc from the mouth of the libation jar held by Thoth.[8]

In an XVIIIth Dynasty (c. 1575 - 1308 B.C.) royal tomb of some forty years later, the pharaoh Amenophis II is depicted pouring a libation to Amun-Re, who bears both the ʿankh and the uas-sceptre (𓋴), the symbol of good fortune.[9] The essential conservatism of Egyptian religion and art is shown in a relief from the later Ptolemaic period. Ptolemy VIII Euergetes (170 - 116 B.C.) is represented pouring a libation to Haroeris (Harwer, an early form of Horus as falcon god) and his wife Tafner. Both divinities bear the ʿankh and Haroeris the uas also.[10]

This brief survey is enough to show that the Egyptians believed that all life came from the gods and that, despite the hope of a happy hereafter, they were realistic enough to cling to the hope of a happy this-worldly existence, which would last as long as possible.

MESOPOTAMIA

In the Land of the Two Rivers life was also greatly prized, more highly, it might be, than in Egypt, for the Mesopotamian looked for little joy in the world to come.[11] In the face of this gloomy prospect they sought by every possible means to prolong their lives. As in Egypt, life was in the keeping of the gods, who bestowed it or withheld it

according to their whim of the moment. This life which they gave was only of a temporal nature, not everlasting, as the luckless hero Gilgamesh found out on his hapless quest for eternal life. In Tablet X of the "Epic of Gilgamesh" the divine alewife, Siduri, warns that everlasting life is only for the gods and that his search must inevitably end in failure. She counsels him to return to his city, his wife and son and to enjoy the good things of life while he can. She was an early exponent of the carpe diem philosophy.

"Gilgamesh, whither runnest thou?
The life which thou seekest thou wilt not find;
(For) when the gods created mankind,
They allotted death to mankind,
(But) life they retained in their keeping."[12]

Nonetheless the men of Mesopotamia prayed for long, full and happy lives. The gods who were able to grant this life were often called by the epithet muballiṭ mīti, "the one who makes the dead to live;" this epithet was bestowed upon such diverse deities as Marduk, the city god of Babylon, Nabu his son and tutelary deity of nearby Borsippa, Ninurta, the war-god, Shamash, the sun-god and lord of justice and Gula, the goddess of healing.[13] Others were called bēl balāṭi, "lord of life," e.g. Marduk, Sumuqan, a Sumerian cattle-god and a chthonic deity, and Ea, the god of wisdom whose home was in the apsū, the deep.[14] Marduk is also called šá bulluṭa irammu, "he who loves to arouse to life;" Shamash is šá-ri-ku ba-lá-ṭi," the giver of life."[15] The name of several Assyrian kings Aššuruballit may be literally translated, "Assur makes to live." Baudissin, in his book, draws attention to the life-giving qualities of Babylonian divinity. He cites a common epistolary greeting formula from the Old Babylonian period (c. 1800 - 1600 B.C.);

(ilu)Šamaš û (ilu)Marduk dâ:îš ûmî
liballiṭûka lû šalmâtâ lû balṭâtâ.

"May Shamash and Marduk keep you alive for ever!
May good and life (be yours)."[16]

This idea of the gods as being able to restore the dead to life (muballiṭ mīti) was most probably used of persons recovering from extreme illness or from a state of great misery. Yet, there is no doubt that the people believed that the gods could restore the dead to life, if they so desired to do. Illness was a form of death, an extension of the sphere of death into the land of the living.[17]

In the Babylonian poem Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi, "I will praise the Lord of Wisdom," the suppliant who had, in the time of his misery, considered himself as already within the realm of death, is restored to life through the intervention of Marduk and his consort Ṣarpanit.

Who but Marduk restores his dead to life?
(mi-tu-ta-šú ú-bal-liṭ)
Apart from Ṣarpānītum which goddess grants life?
Marduk can restore to life from the grave,
Ṣarpānītum knows how to save from destruction."[18]

The use of the imagery of death to describe conditions of illness or distress will be discussed more fully in the concluding chapter. Here we are concerned only with the ability to bestow life, in all its forms, as an attribute of divinity in Mesopotamian mythology. In a prayer to Ishtar there are these requests:

"I seek thy majesty, that there may be life and health.
Guide me daily in well-being and contentment.
Give me length of days and life!
May I be sound and healthy, that I may honour thy divinity."[19]

Those who do good are promised long and full lives by the gods. The sun-god Shamash views the activity of the honest merchant with great favour and rewards him accordingly:

> "It (honesty) is pleasing to Shamash and he will prolong his life.
> He (the merchant) will enlarge his family, gain wealth, and like the waters of a never failing spring /his/ descendants will never fail."[20]

The gods gave life, fertility and prosperity. They were prayed to, cajoled and sometimes even threatened by those who lived in Mesopotamia, who dreaded death and attempted by every means in their power to obtain long life before passing for ever to the land of no return.

CANAAN

The Ugaritic texts available to research are limited in scope and confine themselves to describing the vicissitudes and triumphs of various gods, divine heroes and kings. The texts display that sector of mythology which dealt with the fertility of the land, the preservation of the indispensable natural resources which were the basis of natural human life. Unlike, for example, the "Epic of Gilgamesh," these texts do not concern themselves with the nature and destiny of man. Life in the Ugaritic texts centres itself on life in the natural sphere.

Baal was the god of the fertilising rains which brought nourishment to the earth, allowing the crops to grow and giving food to mankind. Baal was not without enemies among the gods, among them the sea-god Yam, but his chief enemy was Mot, the lord of the underworld and the god of sterility and drought. At one point Baal is forced to descend into the underworld, into the clutches of Mot who then stalks the barren land where all life

has perished in the absence of Baal.[21] When Baal was released life came again to the arid earth, El, the chief god, rejoiced and the lady sun Shapash was cooled by the refreshing rains. Then Baal, in the form of a bull copulated with his sister/wife Anat, as a heifer, in order to increase the fertility of the land.

Life and fertility could be given or withheld by the gods. Anat, the goddess of love and war, destroyed the youthful hero Aqhat, in order to obtain his magic bow, then, regretting her precipitate action, she expressed a desire to restore him to life, which function would appear to have been within her capability.[22] In the legends of Keret and Aqhat the wish for fertility and sexual potency is patent and these gifts are earnestly sought from the gods.

As was indicated, there is little abstract speculation on life in these texts. Perhaps the figure of El, the head of the Ugaritic pantheon, comes nearest to the concept of a creative and sustaining deity. He is the bny bnwt, "the creator of created things (Driver-creatures.)."[23] This is also reflected in Genesis 14 19,22 where Melchizedek blesses Abram in the name of קנה אל עליון

קנה שמים וארץ "El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth." El appears in the Ugaritic texts as a rather ineffectual, but benign father figure concerned for the welfare of men. However, the texts as we have them concentrate on the natural resources of life and its procreative aspects, matters of this-worldly importance.

PHOENICIA

Baudissin has shown that the gods worshipped in Phoenicia were reckoned to be bearers of life and healing. His book deals especially with Adonis of Byblos and Esmun of Sidon. He asserts that Adonis, by his annual return from the underworld brought, like Tammuz in Mesopotamia, life, fertility and a general revival of nature.[24]

The origins of the Tammuz cult are obscure and his fate is the topic of an important body of Sumerian texts. Oppenheim says that it remains a moot point in what respect he should or can be related to certain divinities of later Semitic religions.[25] Be that as it may, by the time of the prophet Ezekiel lamentations for the dead Tammuz were held at the north gate of the temple, though condemned by official religious leaders (Ezekiel 8. 14). It is with this later development of Tammuz that Adonis may be identified. The dying god was mourned and his resurrection greeted with great joy. Adonis gardens were also tended.[26] Esmun of Sidon, whom Baudissin equates with the Graeco-Roman god of healing Asklepios/Aesculapius, was also regarded as a giver of life. Though, as Baudissin remarks, the exact function of Esmun is difficult to define, he probably resembled other local deities of life and fertility, with emphasis on his healing powers.[27]

ISRAEL

When we turn to the Old Testament we are confronted with a deity who is supremely the living God. Unlike the gods of the nations, he could not die, nor could he be linked to any natural phenomenon as its personification. Neither sun, moon nor stars were divine, they were merely reflections of the greater glory of God. He lived beyond the world; heaven was his throne and earth his footstool, for the heaven of heavens could not contain him much less any temple which was the work of man (I Kings 8. 27). Yahweh gave life and a variety of expressions were used to express the concept of Yahweh as the living God:[28]

אל חי , 'the living God.' (Joshua 3.10; Psalms 42.3, 84.3; Hosea 2.1)

אלהים חי , 'the living God.' (2 Kings 19.48 = Isaiah 37.4.17)

אלהים חיים , 'the living God.' (Deut. 5.26; 1 Samuel 17.26; 36; Jeremiah 10.10.23.36)

אלהא חיא , 'the living God.' (Daniel 6.21.27 Aram.)

חי אני נאם יהוה , 'As I live, says Yahweh.' (1 Samuel 14.39, 45 19.6 20.3.21 25.26, 34 et alii)

חי אל , 'As God lives.' (Job 27.2)

חי אדני יהוה , 'As Lord Yahweh lives.' (Jer. 44.26).

It was Yahweh who breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of man who became a living person נפש חיה (Gen. 2.8). A.R. Johnson who has discussed the vitality, the life-quality, of the individual Israelite in terms of physical and psychical phenomena, has shown that all such life came, in the first instance, from Yahweh, however diverse its expressions.[29] The realm of nature had to be rescued from the province of the Baalim and claimed also for Yahweh. Though he was no nature deity in the typical Ancient Near Eastern sense, the Old Testament confidently asserted that it was Yahweh who caused the rain to fall and the crops to grow, who made the seasons change and who moved the two great lights and the lesser luminaries in their prescribed orbits. In Deuteronomy 7. 8-14 Yahweh promised fertility to the

Children of Israel, but in 8.16 he asserted that he had been able to feed their fathers even in the wilderness, a deed beyond the power of any Canaanite Baal. Job 36-40 and Psalms 147 and 148 praise Yahweh as the lord of all nature. He could also heal when, in times of sickness, death was very near (Genesis 20.27; Numbers 12.13; 2 Kings 20 5,8). The verb רפא , "to heal," is used of Yahweh in a purely medical sense.[30] Wounds are also healed by him (Isaiah 30.26; Jeremiah 20.17; Hosea 6.1; Psalm 147.3 and Job 5.18). Yahweh was, all in all, the supreme lord of life and death,

אני אמית ואחיה , "I cause to die and I make alive;"

יהוה ממית ומחיה , "Yahweh kills and makes alive."

It may be concluded beyond all doubt that Yahweh in the Old Testament gave and sustained life in all its aspects. The question must now be asked, what were the characteristics of this life for the believing community of Israel?

In the several books which I have consulted on the various aspects of death in the Old Testament, there have been short introductions, similar in size to the present one, which dealt with life before passing on to death. Biblical passages were cited mainly from the Hexateuch, the Deuteronomic History and the prophets; on these passages were based a series of generalisations about life in the community of Israel.[31] Now it has to be admitted that the compilers of the Hexateuch, the Deuteronomic history and the prophets had an axe to grind and therefore can scarcely be regarded as satisfactory examples of day to day life in Israel. Furthermore the authors of these books listed groups of Biblical passages without attempting any explanation of the, often obscure, Hebrew text. When I expressed some dissatisfaction with this mode of procedure and a desire not to be guilty of similar theological generalisations, it was suggested that a brief survey

of life in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament would yield a much more satisfactory explanation of life in a strongly this-worldly sense. This survey will be undertaken in the realisation that any brief introduction to the subject of life in the Old Testament must, of necessity, have some shortcomings.

Life in the community of Israel was essentially a this-worldly experience, not an abstract theological concept. The rewards of life were measured in length of days, the number of children and the quantity of material possessions; the more the better, with regard to all these. The lives of the patriarch were set up as the ideal, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God promised Abraham (Genesis 15.15),

ואתה תבוא אל אבותיך בשלום תקבר בשיבה טובה

"And you shall go in peace to your fathers, you shall be buried at a good old age."

In Genesis 35.39 Isaac's death is recorded; he died old and full of days. In 49.33 Jacob is also gathered to his fathers leaving an adequate posterity behind him. These men represented the life which every Israelite hoped to emulate, many years, many sons and many goods. When the patriarchs came to die they resigned themselves to their fate with grace. Many years later King David approached death in the same manner with a simple statement to Solomon, his son (2 Kings 2.2.)

אנכי הלך בדרך כל הארץ "I am going the way of all the earth." This was an expression of calm resignation after a long, full and successful life.

When we turn to wisdom there we find a similar preoccupation with the things of this world and scant attention is paid to death.

In Job 42 the closing prose narrative recounts the restoration of the fortunes of Job. However unsatisfactory the theological aspect of the restoration of Job may be, the material reward leaves nothing to be desired. It is a reward centred firmly in this world, there is no hint of an other-worldly solution to Job's problem. His former possessions were doubled, he died a very old man with a large, handsome and successful family. He had been tried in the things of this world and his reward came in very material terms.

The Book of Proverbs contains instruction for the young man who wishes to find his way in the world and make a success of life. The teaching of Old Wisdom has been, in places, subordinated to Yahwism but the rewards of wisdom and the fear of Yahweh are similar, both essentially material and of this world.[32] In Proverbs 3.1-4 the young man who follows the advice of the wisdom teacher is promised many years, a good life and a wealth of possessions. Furthermore, the obedient young man will be successful before God and man. In these verses the world-affirming character of Yahwism, which could take over the rewards proffered by Old Wisdom and make them its own, is emphasised. In verses 14-18 of the same chapter the rewards of wisdom are laid out, life, riches and honour coupled with a pleasant, tranquil progress along the road of life. 4.22-27 demonstrates that wisdom brings the positive qualities of life to light, while the negative qualities are displayed as things to be avoided.

Chapter 8 pictures wisdom as something which affects the centre of life. To use current theological jargon we may say that wisdom is "involved in the world." She takes her stand in the market place or beside the gate of the town. Verses 18-21 list her rewards which are material and which come from attention to the positive qualities of life. To follow wisdom is to obtain long life and the favour of

Yahweh. 9.10,11 show the complete subordination of wisdom to the fear of Yahweh. These two verses are pietistic: but the rewards of this fear come still in material form, long life and many days.

Similar sentiments are found in the sentence literature, e.g. in 10.17,27, and 28 where reverence for Yahweh prolongs life and the righteous man achieves a happy climax to his life. 16.31 points out that old age is a crown of glory, provided that it comes as the fulfilment of a life which has been lived well. Finally 22.4 sums up the reward of one who reverences Yahweh,

עקב ענוה יראת יהוה עשר כבוד וחיים

"On the heels of humility and the fear of Yahweh, come wealth and honour and life."[33]

Even in Ecclesiastes there are verses which counsel men to enjoy the good things of life, as coming from God, 2.24, 3.12,13, 5.18-20 and 8.15. Although the dominant tone of the book is one of complete scepticism the sentiment is expressed that any sort of life is better than death, "a living dog is better than a dead lion," (9.4). Psalm 128, 1-6 points to a life, full, intense and possessing the richest blessings: the man is blessed who fears Yahweh and walks in his ways, happiness and prosperity will be his, his fruitful wife will bear him lusty offspring, he will prosper and see many grandchildren. This was the ideal life, strongly materialistic, with its hopes, ambitions and goals set firmly in this world.

וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו

"For all that a man has, he will give for his life," declared the Satan confidently in the heavenly assembly (Job 2.4).

Life was not a theological abstraction for ivory-towered speculation, it was a vital everyday experience lived within the community of Israel. This life depended absolutely on Yahweh, for man neither created nor maintained it. It was a relationship between Israel and her God who called for absolute obedience and Israel was expected to respond with unquestioning loyalty. The gift of life had to be carefully used and not abused. The Israelite praised and thanked Yahweh for his gift along with the rest of the worshipping community, for to live was also to praise Yahweh, e.g. Psalms 47 and 48: in death all praise ceased. Enough has now been said to show that life in the Old Testament was materialistic and this-worldly, but, if lived wisely and in the fear of Yahweh, it could be at its best a harmonious and fulfilling experience reaching a graceful climax in a revered old age and meeting death with serenity, returning life to its giver, Yahweh

It has been necessary to begin this thesis with a short consideration of life in order to set the mythology of death within the totality of Old Testament thought about man and God. This life, however, was continually threatened by the power of death, and here I do not mean Death mythologically portrayed, but the impersonal force of death which was as much a part of Yahweh's creation as life. Thus over against life we must set death, which came to every Israelite sooner or later and preferably as late as possible. Anything which imposed a limitation on fullness of life was thought to emanate from the sphere of death for death's domain reached far into the land of the living. From the sphere of death came sickness, weakness, imprisonment, oppression, disorder and darkness. Anyone who was in any way severely handicapped in the functions of life was regarded as being in a condition of relative death. For all the positive qualities of life there existed a set of negatives which threatened the former and issued from the realm of death. Pedersen says,

"The nether-world existed wherever there was a nether-world nature."[34] This means that the power of the underworld extended into that life which was in any way weakened. All these threats were ample proof to the Israelite that the sphere of death insinuated itself into the heart of the land of the living, continually threatening to break the relationship between Yahweh and his servants, for death brought disintegration of life in its train. A.R. Johnson has suggested that we may explain death in terms of life i.e. that death is the weakest form of life, for a man lived on in the underworld a mere shadow of his former self.[35] It would seem better, however, not to call existence in Sheol life at all, but death, for it was a state from which all forms of life were absent. It was not 'after-life' it was 'death.' Life was frequently in jeopardy because any weakness in man meant that the full force of life was diminished and a man might then easily succumb to the power of death. Like everywhere else in the Ancient Near East death was often a terrifying fate to be averted for as long as possible.

Some explanation must now be given of the title of this thesis in view of what I have said and in view of what will be stated in the course of the argument. Let us consider a statement of von Rad,

> "Undoubtedly the most remarkable thing in this matter (i.e. the fate of death) is therefore how little Yahwism was able to say about the phenomenon of death. But owing to this very inability to make herself ideologically or mythologically lord of death, in the face of its reality Israel displayed an obedience unrivalled in the history of religion. How voluble are the other religions here, how bold the mythologies! But Israel did not know death as in any way an independent mythical power - death's power was at the bottom the power of Yahweh himself. Death was no last enemy, but Yahweh acting upon men." [36]

In view of this statement how can such a title as "The Mythology of Death in the Old Testament" be justified? It is true indeed that the Old Testament has very little to say about death compared with the large number of texts on the subject from Egypt and Mesopotamia. But if the Old Testament is carefully examined, it is evident that there exist references to the mythology of death. There are passages which describe the underworld, its characteristics, its location, its inhabitants and their relation to the land of the living. There can also be discovered traces of mythological personifications of death and the powers of the underworld. Though these passages are by no means numerous they deserve a closer examination.

However, von Rad's statement about the paucity of mythological references to death in the Old Testament is perfectly compatible with the aim of this thesis which is to examine these passages not only in their Old Testament context but also with reference to the mythologies of death in the Ancient Near East of which Israel was a part. The intention of this examination is to show that the passages in question, which embody the mythological references to death, have, in the majority of cases, no direct bearing on Israel's thought about death or her experience of it. The passages are used in a variety of places and for a variety of purposes, which will emerge in the course of the argument. It will be noted, eventually, that these passages occur mostly in the poetry and wisdom of the Old Testament, a fact which is not without significance for the relation of Israel's poetry and wisdom literature to her background. Death in the prose narratives is hardly discussed, for it was seen as a matter between the individual and Yahweh his God. The dead were cut off from the land of the living and the living God.

It must now be made clear, lest there be any misapprehension about this subject, that it is not "Death in the Old Testament" which is being discussed, for this vast subject has been dealt with frequently and at length elsewhere. It is an attempt to set out systematically all the references to the mythology of death, the underworld and the dead in the Old Testament, to examine them against the background of the Ancient Near East and in their own context and then to list the various uses to which this mythology is put. It now remains to set out briefly the contents of each chapter and the course which the argument will follow.

Chapter 1. The Mythology of Death in the Ancient Near East

This chapter reviews the mythology of Death in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan (from the evidence in the Ugaritic texts). This general review does not, however, preclude a more detailed discussion of Ancient Near Eastern material pertinent to the contents of a certain chapter at the beginning of that chapter. To have included every aspect of the mythology of death, especially in the case of Egypt, would have been beyond the scope of this thesis and would have made this chapter unwieldy.

Chapter 2. The Land of the Dead in the Old Testament

This discusses the names for the land of the dead in the Old Testament. Passages which deal with its location and its characteristics are examined.

Chapter 3. The Inhabitants of the Land of the Dead

In this those who dwelt in the underworld are considered. There is a short excursus on the word rp'um and on רפאים in Phoenician inscriptions as a background to the word in the Old Testament. The relation, if any of the

dwellers in the land of the dead to the land of the living is surveyed with special reference to necromancy, tomb-offerings and the attitude of the bereaved to the departed.

Chapter 4. The Waters of Death

In the Ancient Near East the land of the dead was represented as lying at the foot of the cosmic ocean. The passages in the Old Testament which contain this mythological concept are examined.

Chapter 5. Death the Monster

The background to this chapter may be found in the Ugaritic texts where there is a portrayal of Mot, the death-god, as a monster with gaping jaws. There are several places in the Old Testament where this concept is found with reference to the underworld, which this chapter considers.

Chapter 6. Personification of the Powers of the Underworld

This covers the personifications of various powers of Sheol again with reference to the Ancient Near East.

All the aspects of the mythology of death in the Old Testament are covered under these headings and Chapter 7 acts as a conclusion.

Chapter 7. The Mythology of Death in the Old Testament

Here the uses of the mythology are examined in history, prophecy, praise and wisdom. This chapter shows that these mythological references are fragmented and moribund. They are no longer living expressions of an attitude towards death. They have been incorporated into the Old Testament for literary, didactic and other purposes. The conclusion is reached that death is an experience in the Old Testament, it is the end of life, life in Sheol is death and there is no speculation about an after-life for there is none.

The basis of this thesis is an exegetical examination of the verses in question with reference to the main versions when necessary. Thus, in structure it closely resembles a commentary. I make no apology for this detailed method of examination, for it ensures a balanced consideration of the passages. I wish to let the Old Testament speak for itself. There is thus no attempt to impose a Mesopotamian, Egyptian or Ugaritic pattern upon the texts, the Ancient Near Eastern material is a background - nothing more.

/When this final draft was in preparation there came into my hands the following publication:-

Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament N.J. Tromp (Rome 1969).

This has appeared too late for insertion in the notes to this thesis/.

NOTES TO PREFACE

1. J.A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt (Chicago and London 1957) pp. 84 ff

2. ibid. p. 79

3. A. Erman, The Ancient Egyptians (Trans. A.M. Blackman) (London and New York 1966) p. 286.

4. ibid. p. 297

5. ibid. p. 289 (following the reading of Note 1)

6. ibid. p. 212

7. A.H. Gardiner (Sir), An Egyptian Grammar (Oxford, 1957 pp. 557 and 617

8. P. Montet, Lives of the Pharaohs (London, 1968) p. 58

9. V. Ions, Egyptian Mythology (London, 1968) p. 33

10. ibid. p. 53 and p. 67

11. See below pp. 40 ff.

12. A. Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago and London 1965) p. 70 Tablet X Col. 3 1 ff.

13. K. Tallqvist, Akkadische Götterepitheta Studia Orientalia VII (Helsinki, 1938) pp. 67 f.

I have not repeated his alternative readings in Akkadian as they represent two forms of the same phrase.

14. ibid. p. 42

15. ibid. p. 194 and p. 231

16. W.W.G. Baudissin, Adonis and Esmun (Leipzig, 1911) pp. 311 ff.

17. ibid. pp. 313 ff

18. BWL Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi Tablet IV(?) 33 ff.

19. A. Ungnad, Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer (1921) pp. 177 ff.

20. BWL Hymn to Shamash p. 133 119 ff.

21. A.S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen, 1952) pp. 93 ff.

22. Kapelrud, The Violent Goddess - Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts (Oslo, 1969) pp. 82 ff.

23. CML p. 48 Aqhat II 25

24. Baudissin, op.cit. pp. 94 ff.

25. A. Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia (Chicago, 1968) p. 196. See also p. 366 n. 25 for literature on this subject.

26. Baudissin, op.cit. pp. 138 ff.

27. ibid. pp. 242 ff.

28. The outline of this summary has been taken from,
A. de Bondt, Wat leert het Oude Testament aangaande Het Leven na Dit Leven (Thesis Vrije Univ. A-dam.Kampen,1938) pp. 3 ff.

29. A.R. Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel. (Cardiff 1964) pp. 36 f.

30. Baudissin, op.cit. pp. 385 ff.

31. R. Martin-Achard, De la Mort à la Resurrection d'après l'Ancien Testament. (Neuchâtel, 1956) pp. 11 ff.
de Bondt, op.cit. pp. 3 ff.
C. Barth, Die Erretung vom Tode (Zollikon,1947) pp. 20 ff.

32. For an explanation of the term "Old Wisdom", a treatment of its subordination to Yahwism and its prophetic re-interpretation see the following,

W. McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (Studies in Biblical Theology 44, London,1965) passim.

For the conception of life in its qualitative and quantitative aspects, see my supervisor's recently published commentary,

Proverbs (London, 1970) ad. loc.

33. ibid. p. 244 and p. 570

34. J. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture Vols. I, II. (Copenhagen, 1964) pp. 466 ff.

35. Johnson, op.cit. p. 88

36. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I (Trans. D.M.G. Stalker London, 1963) p. 390.

Chapter 1

THE MYTHOLOGY OF DEATH IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

This chapter is intended to provide some sort of introduction to the mythology of death and the after-life in the Ancient Near East as a background to the succeeding chapters. As G.E. Wright has said, the Old Testament must always be set in its environment and there can be no exception in the case of this subject.[1] A survey of the mythology of death in Ancient Egypt will begin this chapter.

EGYPT

There was in the valley of the Nile an unusual prominence of death for the climate of Egypt preserves skeletons and other material extremely well. A.H. Gardiner says that in no country of the earth is life more attractive, yet in no country is death so nakedly revealed.[2] I presume Gardiner means by this statement that the Ancient Egyptians were fond of life and its joys, yet they gave to their cult of the dead and their beliefs about the world to come a width of expression (unparalled) anywhere else in the Ancient Near East. The majority of Egyptian remains are connected with the cult of the dead. This is simply because the Egyptians built their pyramids and tombs for eternity. They filled them with furniture, paintings of life in the hereafter, models of figures which would come to life and work for the deceased after death and many other utensils. A recent television documentary on the tomb of Tutankhamun, a relatively unimportant pharaoh, showed a wealth of tomb furniture whose richness was almost beyond belief and of the most exquisite beauty. Even the mummy of the young king was remarkably well preserved. The attitude to the dead of the Egyptians was one of affection and they cherished a deep-felt interest in the fate of their dead relatives and friends. They were not

prompted in this by a fear of the deceased and their powers, unlike the dwellers in Mesopotamia, who, as we shall see below, feared and hated their dead.[3]

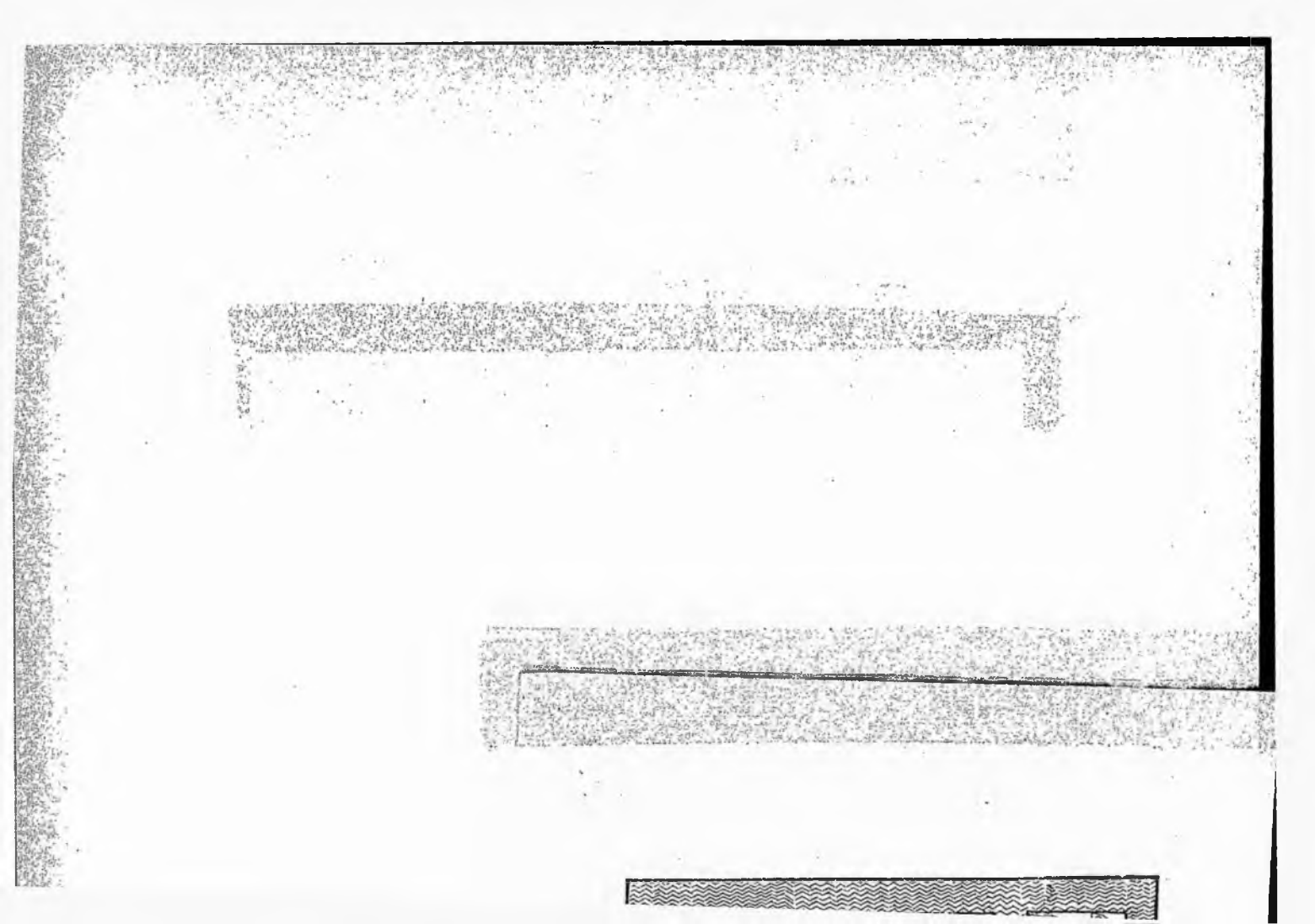
Alone among the peoples of the Fertile Crescent, the Egyptians were convinced that beyond the grave and the gates of death, there was a better and a happier life awaiting the person who had been pronounced "true of voice" before Osiris, the judge of the dead.

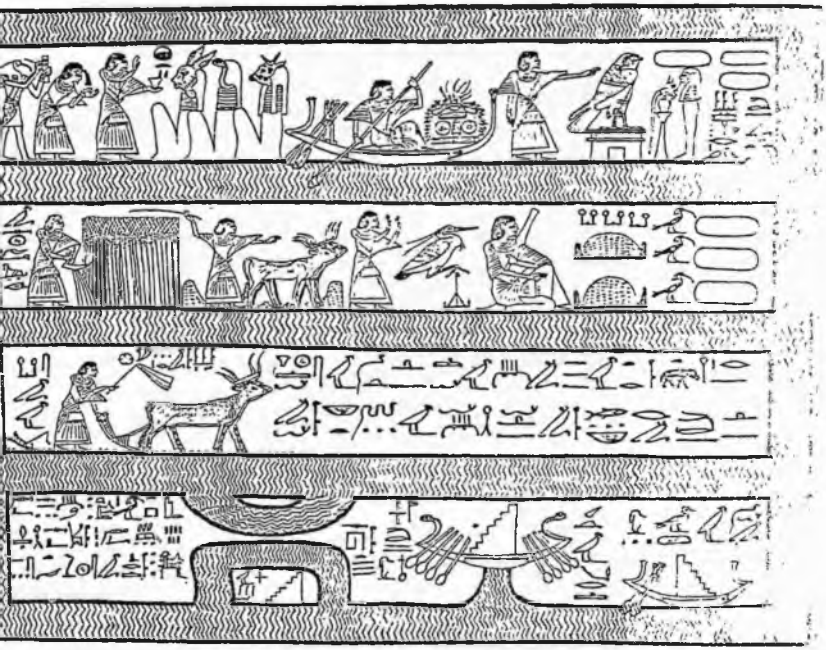
"This land which has no opponent
All our kinsfolk rest in it since the first day of time.
They who are to be, for millions of millions,
Will all have come to it.
There exists none who may tarry in the land of Egypt;
There is not one who fails to reach yon place.
As for the duration of what is done on earth,
It is a kind of dream;
(But) they say: "Welcome, safe and sound!"
To him who reaches the West."[4]

This text sets out the happiness of the deceased who reaches the "West" and becomes a god, living for ever.

In the early days of the Old Kingdom, this happy hereafter was reserved solely for the pharaoh. Later this privilege was also granted to the highest strata of the aristocracy who retained in the next world the ranks which they had held on earth and whose mastabas were grouped round the pyramid of the pharaoh, in the earliest times round the mastaba of the pharaoh (the mastaba was a rectangular brick tomb).[5]

In the course of three millenia there were, naturally, great changes in belief concerning death and the dead; a certain "democratisation" of religion had taken place and immortality, formerly the prerogative of the few, was extended to the ordinary citizen.[6]





Sekhet-ḥetepet (Papyrus of Ani).

But, no doubt the peasants and the slaves who toiled in the fields and slaved on the monuments of the living god (the reigning pharaoh) and of the gods in their temples, could, on death, expect no more than a covering of desert sand or the possibility of becoming a tasty morsel for the crocodiles in the Nile.

The Egyptian land of the dead lay, or was thought of as existing in various places. At an early period in their history the Egyptians believed in the existence of a place where the blessed dead led a life of happiness, the characteristics of which much resembled those of the life which they had formerly led on earth. Perhaps here might be emphasised the essential conservatism of Egyptian religion and life. The motifs of death which were prevalent in the Old Kingdom can also be found in the art and literature of the Ptolemaic period. Further the accretion of material and the disinclination to dispose of any, had led to almost unbelievable complexity in the beliefs about death, the dead and the underworld. In any event the place of the deceased was sometimes known as the Sekhet-hetepet, "the Elysian Fields," or the Sekhet-Àaru," the Fields of Reeds," which was a portion of the Sekhet-hetepet, lit. "the Fields of Peace," which is, perhaps a better translation than Elysian Fields which has distinct Greek overtones.[7] A vignette from the Papyrus of Ani, XIXth Dynasty, shows the occupations of the deceased in the next world (see facing page). In the first register the deceased sculls his boat along a canal bearing gifts for the falcon god. He also adores various gods. In the second panel Ani is reaping and driving oxen which are treading out the grain; he adores the bennu-bird and sits holding a sceptre. The third panel depicts him ploughing near a stream.[8] This place was probably located in the Delta, with its flat farmlands, streams and canals, near Busiris the capital of the ninth nome where the reconstitution of the dismembered body of Osiris took place.[9] In fact the Egyptians constructed the representation of the world to come on the basis of the Egypt which they loved and of which they were fiercely

proud

Later belief placed the country of the dead in the West, the place where Re, the sun-god entered the underworld for the hours of night: in the West lay the celestial fields of Re. At other times the land of the dead was considered to be in the country of the circumpolar stars, whither the deceased pharaoh sailed in his boat to join them. More recently greater attention has been focussed by scholars on the vast amount of material which exists concerning the Egyptian underworld, which will be of more importance for this subject than any of the other locations of the land of the dead, as the Old Testament thought of the place of the dead as existing below the earth, nowhere else.

Before entering the country of the dead, the deceased had to submit to a judgement. The Ancient Egyptians must be credited with the idea of a judgement of the dead, preceding final entry into the next world. The terms for judgement were codified once and for all at the beginning of the New Kingdom, but before this theologians had given much thought to this difficult problem.[10]

The judgement scene took place before Osiris, the lord of the dead in his judgement hall. The whole scene is portrayed on a vignette, again from the Papyrus of Ani.[11] Ani and his wife Thuthu are seen bowing low as they enter the hall. The heart of Ani was weighed by the jackal-headed god Anubis on a balance against the feather of ma'at, usually translated as "truth," but really the principle of order and justice in the cosmos to which all things had to conform. Behind Anubis, who was the god of mummification and of the Western Necropolis, stands the scribal-god Thoth with his reed and palette to enter the verdict and behind him a monster described as Âm-mit, "the Eater of the Dead," he is the one who devours those who have not been found "true of voice" before Osiris. Ani was found "true of voice," and another vignette shows him being led before Osiris by Horus, and kneeling in adoration bf Osiris.[12] Thoth declared to the assembled

company of gods that the heart of Osiris (Ani has become Osiris and conquered death) is true and the gods made a favourable reply:

> "That which cometh forth from thy mouth (Thoth's mouth) shall be declared true. Osiris, the scribe Ani victorious, is holy and righteous. He hath not sinned, neither hath he done evil against us. It shall not be allowed to the devourer Amemet to prevail over him. Meat-offerings and entrance into the presence of Osiris shall be granted unto him, together with a homestead for ever in Sekhet-ḥetepu, as unto the followers of Horus."[13]

In this way Ani is granted entry into the kingdom of the dead.

> "(2) Grant that this Osiris Ani may come forth among the multitudes which are (3) outside; and let him be established as a dweller among the denizens of heaven; and let the underworld be opened unto him. And behold, Osiris, (4) Osiris Ani, shall come forth by day to do whatsoever he pleaseth upon the earth among the living ones."[14]

(The literal translation of the name for the Book of the Dead is, "The Chapters of the Coming Forth by Day.")

The cults of Re and Osiris tended to become somewhat intermingled as the worship of Osiris was gradually celestialised and the dead man was sent to join either Re or Osiris.[15] The Egyptians left many monuments connected with their vast mortuary cultus, graves, pyramids and tombs in the Theban Necropolis. The Book of the Dead in its three major recensions, Heliopolitan (Vth and VIth Dynasties found on the walls of the Pyramids), Theban (XVIIIth and on to XXII Dynasties, found on coffins and written on papyri in both hieroglyphic and hieratic

characters), Saite (XXVIth Dynasty, this recension was much in use in the Ptolemaic period), was designed to assist the deceased individual to attain blessedness and to overcome all the perils and dangers which awaited him on his journey through the underworld. It was used from the earliest dynastic times right through to the end of the Ptolemaic period.[16] It provided the deceased with all the names of the gods, demons, gatekeepers, monsters and other supernatural beings whom he would encounter in the course of his peregrinations in the world of the dead. The Egyptian was encouraged to prepare well in advance for the day of his death. In the "Instruction of King Meri-ka-re", we find these words,

> "The soul goeth to the place which it knoweth, and strayeth not from its paths of yesterday. (Wherefore) make fair thine house of the West, and stately thy place in the necropolis, even as one that is just, as one that hath done right. That it is, whereon their heart reposeth."[17]

The Egyptians tried everything in their power to defeat death. For death brought the cessation of the normal activities of life. The dead could no longer see and hear for the breath of life had left their bodies. The effects of rigor mortis began, with bodily secretions, vile odour and swarming organisms. Death meant a removal from everything that pertained to living. The dead was alone in a greater loneliness than could be imagined.[18] It was, thus, the duty of every son to attend piously to the funerary needs of his parents. Yet funerary observances can hardly, in most cases, have been observed beyond, or even as far as, the grandparents.[19] All three classes, men, gods, and the dead had the same needs and were treated in the same manner; temple, house and tomb all bore a strong resemblance to one another. The Egyptians were panic-stricken as to what might be done or what might happen to them after death, imagining as they did,

that their earthly and bodily needs would persist beyond in the world to come. Nobles made contracts for food offering to be made at their tombs, even during their life-times; property in land was usually set aside for this purpose; ka-priests were given endowments for providing the dead man with food, but such contracts could and did lapse.[20] The Book of the Dead of Nesi-Khonsu, a priestess of Amun-Re of about 1000 B.C. gives us an idea of this desire for tomb-offerings. In the following extract Amun-Re speaks,

> "I deify Nesi-Khonsu, the daughter of Ta-henu-Tehuti in Amentet (a name for the underworld), and I deify her in Neter-Khert (also the underworld); I have granted that she shall receive water in Amentet and funeral offerings in Neter-Khert. I deify her soul and body in Neter-Khert, and I will not let her soul be destroyed therein."[21]

A burial involved an almost incredible amount of ritual and actions. Elaborate mummification took place, at least for the wealthy; these mummifications were conducted under the aegis of Anubis, the jackal-headed god of the dead, the patron of mummification and the ruler of the Western Necropolis.[22] Ceremonies of the opening of the mouth were performed on the mummy which were designed to restore to the deceased the functions of life. Lamentations were made, often portrayed on funerary monuments as the action of Isis and Nephthys wailing for their dead husband/brother Osiris. Thus fortified, the deceased began his journey to the land of the dead. All these ceremonies were intended to express the expectation of the life after death which the Egyptians cherished. They elevated the deceased to the status of an ah, a transcendent, shining being, a sort of luminous spirit.[23]

The attitude of the Egyptians towards death was ambivalent, for there was much to be feared in the underworld. Sander-Hansen has noted various representations of death, some of which were very unpleasant. Death was regarded as a sleep, without seeing or hearing, but only provided the mummy did not decay. Osiris was "one who sleeps." The dead existed, as we shall see, in a world of night and darkness, as opposed to the clear, sunny light of day;

> "The house of the dwellers in the West Land (the dead)
> is deep and dark, no door or window is in it .....
> but the dead lie all day in darkness." [24]

Death was a sickness, an illness or weakness. It was an enemy, a plunderer and one who robbed men of life. For despite mummification and the assurances of a happy after-life, death was a circumstance to be avoided.[25]

This negative attitude noted by Sander-Hansen has been developed very much more fully in a recent study by J. Zandee.[26] He has succeeded in showing that there was a conception like Sheol in Ancient Egyptian religion. He says, "Nevertheless there are found utterances now and again, which make us think of a negative view."[27] In the Pyramid Texts, staying in the earth, stands in contrast to the ascension to heaven. The dead man hopes to escape from the earth and not be seized by the gods of the earth, so that he may go to the heavens with Re. In the Book of the Dead the jaws of Geb[28] must be opened for the deceased, so that the ascension may begin.

> "May the doors of heaven be opened unto me (5);
> may Seb (Zandee reads Geb, the correct reading),
> the Prince of the gods, open wide his two jaws unto me."

Zandee takes this to mean that the earth god Geb must open his jaws to release the deceased.[29] Geb is the dreaded earth god which holds fast those it has taken.

In an ascension text from the Coffin Texts we read that the mouth of the earth is opened for the king that he may ascend to heaven.[30] This privilege is reserved solely for the monarch. In another text Osiris is credited with the power to retain the dead in the underworld. This text gives Osiris a rather sinister character opposed to his later representations as the just judge of the dead.

> "I have claimed him (the king) from Hrty (a god like Osiris)
> I do not deliver him to Osiris, I open to him the gate
> which keeps at bay."[31]

He who does not ascend to heaven finds himself in the subterranean dark realm of the dead which reminds one strongly of Sheol in the Old Testament. Zandee further says that there must have been, at one time, a view that a gloomy existence awaited all the dead in the underworld. Thus it had to be most emphatically denied that the king participated in this dreadful fate. I wish now to consider some of the characteristics of this gloomy underworld.

The deceased had to pass through seven gates, 'rr.t, which were guarded by gatekeepers whose names the deceased had to know in order to traverse them safely and enter the underworld.[32] Interestingly enough, the Babylonian city of the underworld had seven gates which the goddess Ishtar had to pass through when she went from heaven to the netherworld.[33] The lord of this nether domain was a deity whom the Egyptians called Skr pronounced "Sokaris," since Cratinus (c. 520-423 B.C.) is reputed to have mentioned a god Σώχαρις related to Pamyles, a figure who seems to have been a variant of Osiris.[34]

Bleeker has a great deal to say about this rather mysterious divinity, who appears as lord of death. Though he was worshipped in many sanctuaries, there is no temple extant which is dedicated purely and solely to his use.[35] He was, almost inevitably, identified with Osiris, but he was not, like Osiris, the refuge of the justified souls of the dead. Osiris excelled in human virtues, Sokaris was elusive and mysterious.[36] Sokaris was a chthonic deity, who, nevertheless, was a giver of fertility, but this fertility lay deep in the underworld, where Sokaris was lord of the region of the land of the dead which constituted the Fourth and Fifth Hours of the night. This region stood in sharp contrast to the fertile pastures of the other hours of the night through which the sun-god sailed in his night-barque along the underground Nile. The Fourth and Fifth Hours of the night were a desert land over which the barque of the sun-god had to be dragged. It was a dark land and full of serpents, it was cut off from the path of Re so that he did not light it in his passage through the underworld. These two hours constituted part of the unpleasant aspects of the Egyptian underworld. The representation of the Fifth Hour shows the god Sokaris standing on sand within an ellipse, supported by the earth-god Aker in the form of two human-headed lions emerging from either end of the ellipse.[37]

The realm of the dead was dark. Ringgren has emphasised this aspect of Egyptian religion in an article.[38] This darkness is briefly dispelled by the passing of the sun-god:

> "Thou lightest the face of those who belong to the Netherworld.
> Thou raisest up those who are laid low,
> Thou rejuvenatest the nostrils of those who are in it.
> They are warm when it comes to pass that thou art new in
> thy former shape .....

Thou distributest thy beams in the Netherworld,
Thou shinest for those who are all in darkness,
Those who are in their coffins are joyful."[39]

Re's goodness in this respect is also mentioned in the Book of the Dead,

"O thou who art greatly beloved by those who dwell in the Tuat (underworld); thou shinest with thy beams upon the beings that are therein perpetually, and thou sendest forth thy light upon the path of Re-stau."[40]

The Book of Gates, which describes Re's progress in the night-barque through the twelve hours of the night describes not only the progress of the ship but the various aspects, pleasant and unpleasant, of the underworld.[41] As Re enters each of the twelve divisions the dead rejoice for he brings light and food, but they lament when he has passed as they are again left in gloom.

"They live upon the food offerings of Re and the funeral offerings of the First of the Westerners (Osiris). Offerings are brought to them on earth; libations are offered to them, consisting of justification in the West. The one with upraised arm (Re) is in their hidden places. They lament Re, they mourn for the great god after he has passed them by. When he is gone darkness covers them and their caverns are closed behind them."[42]

It is only the just who enjoy the benefits which Re brings, the unworthy sinners are left in darkness and subjected to torture.[43] Even more unpleasant aspects of the underworld may be easily found in the Book of the Dead.

Chapters are full of extremely unpleasant fates and the means of avoiding them. The chapters were recited by the deceased in order that he might assume the powers they describe and thus give him the ability to overcome the dangers of the underworld. Chapters 10 and 11 give the deceased power over his enemies by taking on the strength of the gods, Osiris in Chapter 10, and Re, Horus, Ptah and Thoth in Chapter 11.[44] Chapters 33, 34 and 35 give the dead man power to repel snakes and serpents.[45] The deceased had to avoid eating filth and drinking foul water in the underworld (52 and 53).[46] Torture had to be faced and overcome, Chapter 85,

> "I am the lord of (5) light, and that which is an abomination unto me is death; let me not go into the chamber of torture which is in the underworld."

There is a list of all the horrors of the underworld in the contents list at the beginning of each volume of the Book of the Dead (Budge).[47]

Decomposition and loss of the essential functions of life awaited the dead man in this grim domain. He was forced to walk upside down, so that his mouth became his rectum and he had to eat his own excrement.[48] Death was a sleep which the deceased slept in the earth.[49] As we noted the land of death was a realm of darkness, which the deceased besought the gods of the Qerti (districts of the underworld) to dispel,

> "O send ye forth your light and scatter the darkness [which is about] you."[50]

Zandee gives in his extensive volume a detailed account of the demons, monsters and other horrors which awaited the dead person, which it would be superfluous merely to repeat here. I have attempted to bring out most of the characteristics of the Ancient Egyptian ideas

about death. The terrifying and fearsome aspects of the underworld have been emphasised as they accord more with the representation of Sheol in the Old Testament. We may leave Egypt with these words from a song of a harpist dating from the earlier period of Egyptian literature. They enshrine the attitude of the realist to death in any age; death is something to be feared no matter how elaborate the funerary ritual or how strong the belief in an after-life.

"There is none who comes back from (over) there,
That he may tell their state
That he may tell their needs,
That he may still our hearts
Until we (too) may travel to the place where they have gone.
Let thy desire flourish.
In order to let thy heart forget the beatifications for thee.
Follow thy desire, as long as thou shalt live.
Put myrrh upon thy head and clothing of fine linen upon thee,
Being anointed with genuine marvels of the god's property.
Set an increase to thy good things;
Let not thy heart flag.
Follow thy desire and thy good.
Fulfil thy needs upon the earth, after the command of thy heart,
Until there come for thee that day of mourning.
The Weary [of Heart] (Osiris) hears not their mourning,
And wailing saves not the heart of a man from the underworld."[51]

MESOPOTAMIA

In Sumer, Akkad and Assyria we find a totally different situation. There were no great pyramids, no funerary monuments designed for eternity and no elaborate techniques of mummification to preserve the body. Death was an occasion of the greatest despair, a cutting off from all that was worthwhile; above all it meant entry into the grim underworld. Our knowledge of the Sumerian afterlife is somewhat scanty, at least from the earlier period. However, some of the excavations of Woolley show that there was, in the earlier period at any rate, some conception of an afterlife which was not totally forbidding. Referring to some of the proto-historic al 'Ubaid and Jamdat Nasr graves (so-called after the settlements where the remains were discovered and which may be dated c. 3000 B.C.) he says,

> "This provision made for the dead seems clearly to prove a belief in a future life of some sort, but there is nothing found which expressly defines such belief; in no single grave has there been any figure of a god, any symbol or ornament that strikes one as being of a religious nature; the dead man took with him what he might require for a journey to or for a sojourn in another world, but what he thought about the world to which he was going nothing tells us. The tomb furniture is intended to satisfy purely material needs and its quantity and quality merely reflect the social standing of the dead man and his family in this world."[52]

He discusses at great length the tomb furniture and appurtenances of graves which had somehow escaped the predatory invasions of the tomb-robbers, these invasions were, as in Egypt, of frequent occurrence.

The tomb of Mes-kalam-dug, a prince of the royal house of Ur, yielded a great treasure.[53] The graves of King A-bar-gi and Queen Shub-ad, probably husband and wife, also produced amassed wealth.[54] Woolley concludes his survey of this period with an evocative description of the final assembly of all the attendants, courtiers and retainers who were to accompany the king and queen into the next world.[55]

> "Down into the open pit, with its mat-covered floor and mat-lined walls, empty and unfurnished, there comes a procession of people, the members of the dead ruler's court, soldiers, men-servants and women, the latter in all their finery of brightly-coloured garments and head-dresses of carnelian and lapis-lazuli, silver and gold, officers with the insignia of their rank, musicians bearing harps or lyres, and then, driven or backed down the slope, the chariots drawn by oxen or by asses, the drivers in the cars, the grooms holding the heads of the draught animals, and all take up their allotted stand at the bottom of the shaft and finally a guard of soldiers forms up at the entrance. Each man and woman brought a little cup of clay or stone or metal, the only equipment needed for the rite which was to follow. There would seem to have been some kind of religious service down there, at least it is certain that the musicians played up to the last; then each of them drank from their cups a potion which they had brought with them, or found prepared for them on the spot - in one case we found in the middle of the pit a great copper pot into which they could have dipped - and then they lay down and composed themselves for death."

The whole ritual of interment was apparently a long and involved process. The royal body was sealed in the tomb and sacrifices made before the sealed entrance. Libations were poured out to the dead and offerings to the gods of the underworld were made.[56] All this almost certainly indicates a belief in a future life for those who chose to serve their ruler in the beyond, possibly in some paradisal land, like the land of Dilmun. There are other Sumerian texts, however, which picture a very gloomy fate for the individual in the land of the dead and which will be dealt with in due course. Possibly the lavish burial of the king and the, seemingly voluntary, suicide of the courtiers, testify to the belief that the Sumerian kings were deified at death and the courtiers, unlike ordinary men, were assuring themselves of immortality by serving the god/king in the next life.[57] In Egypt sacrifice of retainers was also known from excavations at the First and Second Dynasty royal burials at Abydos and Sakkara in Upper and Lower Egypt respectively.[58] When this practice ceased in Egypt a certain democratisation of immortality had already begun, but in Mesopotamia, when burial customs began to change at the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2100 B.C.) an emphasis began to be laid on the gloomier aspects of the Sumerian underworld, possibly due to increasing Semitic influence from Akkad in the north. Woolley says,

> "Now in the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the burial customs of the people of Ur underwent a profound change, and amongst other things grave furniture was reduced to a minimum; the graves of the well-to-do folk of that age and of the Larsa age which followed it are beggarly compared with those of the Early Dynastic Cemetery. The change in custom should reflect a change in religious belief."[59]

Probably this change is reflected in the written texts which are almost certainly later than 2000 B.C.; the generality of these texts present, as we shall see below, a gloomy picture of life in the underworld.

The Sumero-Akkadian underworld was designated by a variety of names, some Sumerian in origin and adopted by the Akkadians and some which are of Akkadian (Semitic) origin. Through the custom of burying the dead in the earth, the idea arose that the dead continued their existence in an underworld situated in the earth. Thus, "world of the dead" and "underworld" were equated. The Sumero-Akkadian names for the underworld were extremely numerous and I propose to comment only on the most important of them.

(a) irkallu

This is a fairly common name for the underworld. It occurs in phrases such as,

ša šarrat ir-kal-li līdil abullaša

"Let the gate of the queen of the netherworld be closed."

A god threatens,

"I shall shake the netherworld (ir-kal-lu/la) and make heaven tremble."[60]

In the Babylonian poem Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi, "I will praise the Lord of Wisdom," the suppliant talks of the vanity of life and the constant change from happiness of misery among people,

ina ṭa-a-bi i-ta-ma-a i-li šá-ma-'i
ú-taš-šá-šá-ma i-dab-bu-ba a-rad ir-kal-la

"In prosperity they speak of scaling heaven
Under adversity they complain of going down to hell."[61]

Irkalla was also employed as the name of the goddess who ruled the underworld. In the poem "Ishtar's Descent to the Underworld," the goddess of heaven leaves her abode to journey to visit her sister Ereshkigal (here Irkalla), both meanings of irkallu are used,

Ištar āšibat qirbi ir-kal-li É Ir-kal-li ša ālikūtišu la tajāru

"Ishtar who dwells in the underworld in the house (Sumerian-É) of Irkalla (the goddess) whence nobody who goes there returns."[62]

In this context the underworld was also known as the mūšab ^{d}Irkalla or šubat ^{d}Irkalla, "the dwelling of Irkalla."[63]

(b) irṣitu (Sumerian KI)

This word, literally meaning "earth", became the most popular and the most frequently used designation of the underworld. Indeed, as we shall note, its popularity was not confined to Akkadian, but its cognates were employed for the same purpose in Hebrew and Ugaritic. The use of the simple word "earth" to signify the underworld arose from the fact that the dead were buried in the earth and thus the word came in time to denote the kingdom in which they were believed to reside. It often appears alone and without attribute.[64]

^{d}Nergal ištu er-ṣe-ti il-lâ

"Nergal comes up from the underworld."[65]

Nergal was the king of the underworld, the husband of Ereshkigal, but also the tutelary deity of the city of Cutha. Again in the poem Ludlul, the writer lists the sicknesses and calamities which have come upon him from the sphere of the underworld, one of them is headache,

⌈u⌉l-te i-rat erṣetim i-ši-ḫa ti-' -i

"Headache has sprung up from the surface of the underworld."[66]

The irṣitu claimed the god Tammuz each year,
illak iš̄it ana irat irṣiti

"He goes, he escapes to the bosom of the underworld."[67]
Sometimes the word was written with the Sumerian ideogram for "earth" KI, with the appropriate Akkadian case ending,
^{d}Iš̄tar ana KI-tim urid ul ilâ.

"Ishtar has gone down into the netherworld and has not come up."[68]
In the "Epic of Gilgamesh" the dead Enkidu, the friend of Gilgamesh, is said to have been seized by the underworld, "irṣitu has seized him."[69] The word was also frequently found in attribute to certain chthonic deities, e.g. aš̄ib irṣiti "dweller in the underworld," a common appellation for most underworld deities which vied in popularity with bēl irṣiti "Lord of the underworld," used, for example of Nergal.[70]
Female goddesses were called correspondingly bēlit irṣiti, "lady of the underworld." One of these was Nisaba, a Sumerian grain goddess, taken over by the Babylonians. In the contest fable "Nisaba and Wheat," Wheat accuses Nisaba of picking a quarrel with all the plants of the field and of causing a dispute between the Igigi (the gods of heaven) and the Anunnaki (the gods of the netherworld). Wheat says,
"Addressing Nisaba, mistress of the underworld, (bēlit erṣetim)
'Why, Nisaba, do you fight in the land?'"[71]
Other names were used with the genitive irṣiti to express attributes of the netherworld divinities.
Nergal, š̄ar irṣiti, "king of the underworld."
Tammuz, rē'ū irṣiti, "Shepherd of the underworld."
Ereshkigal, š̄arrat/bēlit irṣiti, "queen/lady of the underworld."

Namtar, sukkal irṣiti, "vizier of the underworld."
Gilgamesh, šāpir irṣiti, "regent of the underworld."
Ningiszida, guzalu irṣiti, "herald of the underworld."
Nedu, né-dug-gal ša irṣiti, "great gate-keeper of the underworld."
Belit-seri, ṭupšarrat irṣiti, "(lady) scribe of the underworld."
These were the principal deities of the underworld who aided Nergal and Ereshkigal in their rule of the grim domain. There were also the judges of the dead, the Anunnaki, dAnunnaki ša irṣiti. "the Anunnaki who are in the underworld."[72] The word irṣitu was combined with adjectives which qualified it in various ways to intensify its meaning of "underworld;" irṣitu šaplātu, "the deep land." The denizens of the underworld were the niše šaplāti, "the men of the deep (place)." Šaplatu stood often in parallel to elātu, "high, lofty." Shamash the sun-god was the bēl elāti u šaplāti, "the lord of heaven and the underworld." The underworld was also a spacious place, it was the irṣitu rapaštu, "the broad land."[73]

(c) kigallu (Sumerian KI-GAL)

Many of the names of the underworld have a Sumerian origin, some translated into Akkadian and others retaining their Sumerian form. This word kigallu is one of the latter type; KI = irṣitu = "earth, underworld," GAL = rabû = "great," thus "the great place."[74] The word in Akkadian is used to signify a foundation for building; buildings were constructed, ina irat kigalla, "on the bosom of the underworld."[75] The word really denotes a vast space under the earth. It also appears in the name of the queen of the underworld, Ereshkigal. erešu is a Sumerian loan-word which means the same as the Akkadian šarrat, "queen." Thus the Akkadian Ereshkigal is a derivation from the Sumerian dNIN-KI-GAL, E-re-eš-ki-i-ga-a-al,

in Akkadian. CAD suggests that ereš is used for the Sumerian NIN or GAŠAN, both meaning "lady;" the word is not preserved in lexical texts in Akkadian, but it is found in Sumerian.[76] This is so, according to Deimel; ereš = NIN/GAŠAN = the Akkadian bêltu (lady), rubâtu (princess), šarratu (queen). Thus the Akkadian name of the underworld is, like so much else in the Akkadian mythology of death, of Sumerian origin, EREŠ-KI-GAL*, "the lady of the great place."[77]

Kigalla would seem, in the first instance, to be a technical term coming from the world of building and its meaning of "underworld" is very possibly secondary.

(d) apsū

This word is important as it will appear later in the discussion about the cosmic ocean and its relation to the Old Testament, with reference to the location of the underworld. In Mesopotamia the land of the dead was often represented as lying in the depths of the world ocean, the apsū. Apsū was the dwelling place of the demons of plague and sickness. Evil demons had to be sunk in the waves of the sea (a-gu-ú ta-ma-tu).[78] Tamtu, "sea," is used in this context as well as apsū. We noted above in Ludlul how "headache" had come from the surface of the underworld, in the succeeding lines of the same poem other names for the underworld are mentioned including apsū. The line which mentions apsū is as follows:

⌈su-u⌋-lu limnu it-ta-ṣa-a ap-su-uš-šú

"An evil cough has left its apsū".

In these lines of the poem apsū is parallel to irṣitu and also to ēkur and ᵏadû which, as we shall see immediately below, also designate the underworld. Thus apsū, the ocean was also used for the land of the dead which lay in its depths.[79] In another, admittedly obscure, phrase apsū is equated with the goddess Ereshkigal,

a-ᵏib Ea kî ap-su-ú ap-su-ú tam-tim tam-tim Ereᵏkigal

"Ea is present as the apsū, the apsū is the sea and the sea is Ereshkigal."[80]

The translation is not really satisfactory, at best we may say that Ea and Ereshkigal are linked in some way with the ocean, perhaps because they both dwell there.

Tallqvist cites a Sumerian phrase connecting the Anunnaki with the apsū, AB-ZU E-NU-UN, "the apsū of the Anunnaki."[81]

(e) ekurru, ᵏadû

These are two further popular names for the underworld. ekurru is a peculiar designation of the underworld as a mountain. ekurru again comes from Sumerian, from É-KUR, "mountain house." This is the mythical world mountain in whose depths lies the kingdom of the dead. It was also called in Sumerian the É-ḪUR-SAG-KUR-KUR-RA, "the mountain house of the lands." Tallqvist notes that the Cylinder of Sargon of Akkad says that the gods Ea, Sin, Shamash, Nabu, Adad, Ninurta and their sublime wives were born, "in the great mountain house of the lands," ina kirib ehursaggalkurkurra.[82] Ghosts came out of Ekur, "The (irresistible) ghost came out of Ekur (i/š-t/u É.kur)."[83]

In lamentations for Tammuz it is said that the god has gone into the mountain, (KUR).

"The god has gone to the mountain (KUR, the underworld). The god has been shut up in the mountain (KUR)."[84]

KUR = šadu/ḫursan = "mountain" and it also = mâtu (land) = irṣitu (underworld) and $\acute{E}_2$ = bîtu = "house."[85]

(f) URU-GAL

"The great city," this was another name for the underworld, a purely Sumerian phrase, unaltered in Akkadian.[86]

(g) qabru, šuttu

The grave as the place where the dead live must have been one of the earliest designations of the underworld. qabru is employed to translate the Sumerian URU-GAL and IRI-GAL, "the great city," an idea which may stem from the concept of the underworld as a vast communal grave, which concept will be encountered in the Old Testament. qabru appears in syllabaries as a designation of the kingdom of the dead, but there is some dubiety as to whether it was employed in living speech. Tallqvist notes a text which says that the chained gods and the angry spirits have come from the grave (ištu qab-rim) to claim the offerings for the dead and various other libations. The ghosts of the dead are said to come out of the qabri. Šuttu and būru (pit) are synonymous with qabru, both meaning grave and underworld. The underworld is the mat bi-ru-tu, "the land of depth," or "the deep country."[87]

(h) KUR-NU-GI(A)/irṣit lâ târi

This was originally a Sumerian name for the underworld, "the land of no return." The Akkadian irṣit lâ târi is a direct translation of this. It was said that whoever went to the underworld took the path of no return, the ú-ru-uḫ la târi.[88]

In a Babylonian dialogue on the problem of suffering we find the following line,

"My mother who bore me departed to the Land of No Return (erṣet lā târi)."[89]

In the Akkadian "Descent of Ishtar," (cf. also the Sumerian Descent of Inanna) the goddess Ishtar resolves to visit her sister Ereshkigal,

"To the Land of no Return, the realm of ⌈Ereshkigal⌋
Ishtar, the daughter of Sin, ⌈set⌋ her mind.
Yea, the daughter of Sin set ⌈her⌋ mind
To the dark house the abode of Irkalla."[90]

The land of Ereshkigal/Irkalla was that bourne whence no traveller returned.

(i) hubur

This word, the name for the river of the underworld is used pars pro toto for the underworld itself. Nergal is the lu-gal hu-bur, "the lord of the river hubur." In exorcism formulae evil spirits were banished across the river hubur,

"They must go through the gate, not ⌈return⌋, they must enter the river hubur, not turn themselves back, they must enter the gate of the city of the dead."[91]

In the Babylonian Theodicy the passing of former generations is referred to,

"Our fathers in fact give up and go the way of death (ú-ru-uh mu-ú-t⌈u⌋.

It is an old saying that they cross the river Hubur (na-a-ri hu-bur ib-bi-ri)."[92]

(j) EDIN/sēru

Again the original word is Sumerian, EDIN, "desert, steppe." The world of the dead was thought to lie in the west where the desert, the haunt of demons and other unpleasant creatures, lay.

utukku lemnu ša ina se-rì amēla baltu inarru

"The evil utukku-demon which murders the healthy (lit. living) man in the steppe-land."[93]

The desert to the west of Babylon was the fore-court of the underworld and under the control of Belit-seri, the scribe of the underworld and the lady book-keeper of heaven and earth.[94] Both the Sumerian EDIN and the Akkadian sēru were names for the underworld.[95] This name is favoured in songs of lament for Dumuzi/Tammuz. In one lament Inanna of Uruk weeps for Dumuzi her brother/husband and says,

"Weeping my heart goes to the Steppe (EDIN),
(goes) to the place of the young man,
(goes) to the place of Dumu-zi,
to the underworld, the place of sojourn of the shepherd."

The Steppe in the following strophe is said to be the place where Dumuzi is bound and imprisoned and the underworld must thus be meant.[96] The underworld is also called the É-DUMUZI, "house of Dumuzi," bît Tammuz, in Akkadian.[97] Tammuz is sometimes called the be-el ši-rim, "lord of the steppe." The Sumerian cattle god Sumuqan who apparently died and rose again was the man-su šēri[98] "the lord of the steppe."

(k) namû ḫarbu

The underworld was a waste, a desert place. It was in the aṣar ḫurbati, "the waste place," that Ishtar proposed to seek her husband.[99]

At other times the place of the dead was represented as a city with seven gates guarded by demons, as in one of the Egyptian concepts of the underworld. The land of the dead was dark and gloomy, a place from which there was no return to the land of the living; if a spirit did rise, it was because it had been conjured up or had risen to torment the living who had neglected to provide the necessary tomb-offerings and libations. Ereshkigal was the ruler of this land, the wife of Nergal, who was also tutelary deity of Cutha, a name also used of the underworld, kutu^{ki}.[100] Nergal was, originally, a fertility deity and a story tells how he had become ruler of the underworld. Ereshkigal was apparently unable to leave her domain, so the gods told her to send one of her servants to heaven to collect her portion of a banquet which they were preparing. Namtar, her vizier, went to heaven; when he arrived there the gods rose one by one to greet the envoy of their sister, with the exception of Nergal. For this insult he was summoned to the underworld, a summons which he could not refuse to obey. In the end he went, but took precautions by placing his own men at the gates of the underworld, fourteen in number, as opposed to the seven in the "Descent of Ishtar." He cut down Namtar and then proceeded to do the same to Ereshkigal whom he dragged from her throne. With woman-like cunning she burst into tears, offering him her hand and rule over the "wide nether world." Nergal responded like a gentleman, kissing her and wiping away her tears. This myth is intended to explain how Nergal the tutelary deity of Cutha and consort of Laaz, became the god of the underworld.[101]

Ereshkigal pronounced a curse on the new arrivals, and, with the help of the Anunnaki gods, the judges of the underworld and guardians of the spring of life, which lay in their domain, she dealt with the dead.

Before her stood her vizier, Namtar, a god of plague, and Nedu, the chief gatekeeper of the underworld. Around them the place was full of fearful and ghastly demons, held in the underworld so that they would not rise to terrorise the land of the living. Even the dead were regarded as demons, who would come to the upper world to torment the living, if they were not kept below by proper attention to their mortuary services. We find a list of such demons which had seized upon a man in a text quoted by Ebeling,[102]

"He has clothed himself with me, be it the wicked utukku, be it
[the wicked alû]
Be it the wicked eṭimmu, be it the wicked gallû, be it the wicked god,
Be it the wicked rabiṣu, be it the labartu, be it the labāṣu,
Be it the ahhāzu, be it the lilu, be it the lilītu, be it
[the ardat lili]

The demons may be explained as follows:

utukku - a demon, an incubus which lay with women at night,[103]

alû - an individualised demonic power. It appears in enumerations of demonic beings as a formless and featureless power, which engulfed the entire individual.[104]

eṭimmu - a ghost of spectre, the spirit of the dead.[105]

gallû - an evil demon which apparently roamed round the city at night blocking the roads and killing people.[106]

rabiṣu - the name of a demon who may be termed a "lurker" hanging round to waylay people (cf. Gen. 4.7). There is a phrase rabiṣu biti which means the guardian of a house.[107]

labartu - a type of female demon.[108]

labāṣu - a demon of sickness.[109]

ahhāzu – the word primarily means jaundice and then by extension a word signifying the demon personifying the disease.[110]

lilû – a demon of the night and of the storm.

ardat lilî – this is to be connected with the former and means literally, "maid of the night."[111]

The utukku and the etimmu were the ghosts of the dead who rose to plague the living and were amongst the most dreaded beings of Mesopotamian demonology. All tomb offerings were made in a spirit of abject fear, for the untended dead would return to make life very unpleasant for the living.[112]

The Ancient Mesopotamians regarded death and the dead with the greatest horror. The fact of death changed a loved relative or friend into a dreaded demonic being who could afflict the living if they neglected his mortuary service.[113] Death placed the individual at the mercy of the living for essential nourishment, but, in turn, it endowed him with the demonic power with which to take revenge for his neglect. Thus the upkeep of mortuary services was necessary for both sides of the family.

There is some very slight evidence for believing that the Babylonians thought that the individual had to face a sort of judgement after death. This belief is not in any way so clearly defined as in Egypt, nor is it anywhere nearly so well documented. Ebeling quotes what he calls, "A Judgement Scene in the Underworld." However, the text is extremely difficult and the precise meanings of many of the words are in dispute. It apparently dealt with the deceased trying to set himself out as innocent before an underworld tribunal. The second column of the tablet contains a sort of monologue in which the soul induces itself to be calm and confident. In Column III, the dead man takes ship for the assembly of judgement, which seems

to lie in Dilmun, on a mountain. It must be emphasised that all this is most obscure.[114] He notes a further text, found in Elam but written in Akkadian; it is very probably of Babylonian origin despite the Elamite colouring. There is one Elamite god, Šugurnak and two Babylonian gods of the underworld mentioned. The text is well worth quoting in that a strangely optimistic view of conditions after death prevails, possibly under Elamite influence,

"Come, I will proceed, my god, my lord,
before the Anunnaki
I will pass away to the grave-chamber (?),
I will grasp thy hand; before the
great gods
I will hear judgement, grip thy foot.
Thou lightest up the house of darkness, my god,
thou permittest me to flee (?) 9 .....
from the thicket of weakness (and toil).
In the land of need
thou attendest to me.
Thou drenchest me with water and oil
on the field of thirst."

These are the clearest lines of the text, the remainder is somewhat obscure. The gods seem to precede the dead man to a "weigher" who has scales, but what he weighs is not mentioned. Šugurnak speaks to the "weigher" on behalf of the dead man. Then the deceased is granted a home, water and oil in the underworld.[115] This type of text acted as a sort of vade mecum for the dead; a short prospectus of all that might happen in the underworld.

One other text might be noted in this context, which Ebeling gives. Again, the utmost caution must be exercised as the text is very problematic; added to this it is in Sumerian, and therefore any judgement of my own must rest on Ebeling's German translation. The clearest lines are as follows:-

> "On the day of lamentation [.....] the terror of the underworld as a wall.
> To the place of determination of fate they come, to the river of the underworld.
> The good and the wicked it (?) will divide, the just one lays himself down to rest.
> Whoever is wicked his abundance will be cast down,
> his ghost is in the depths of the ocean."

Then a goddess, the wife of Enlil, speaks, saying that the gods have given the rule of heaven and earth into her hands. She is the goddess of the underworld river, the daughter of Ereshkigal and her river lies near the mountain where the sun-god rises. She then extols her power to give rest to the deceased, but warns that the wicked will not escape the power of her arm.[116] Georges Roux suggests that sources tell us that the sun lit the netherworld on its way round the earth and that Utu, the sun-god, pronounced judgement on the dead. He does not detail his sources and I have found nothing to confirm this statement.[117] The sun-god was, however, the lord of justice on earth, so perhaps he exercised the same function in the underworld.

There are several texts which give a composite picture of what the Sumerians and Akkadians had to say about the land of the dead. The first text concerns Gilgamesh, the Mesopotamian king and hero. In this text, "The Death of Gilgamesh," he dies and descends to the

underworld to take up his abode there. He is accompanied by his wife, his son and all his court. Kramer makes the interesting suggestion that here we have a possible reference in textual form to the mass sacrifice of palace retainers with the dead ruler of which Woolley found clear traces at Ur. Thus it would appear that the sacrifices which Gilgamesh offers up in the underworld are intended to secure his and his Court's comfortable sojourn in the underworld. The list of deities to whom he sacrifices contains well-known figures of the underworld; Ereshkigal, the queen, Namtar, the vizier and demon of death, Nedu, the chief porter, Ningishzida and Dumuzi and finally Dimpikug, whose function is unknown.

"Gilgamesh, the son of Ninsun,
Weighed out their offerings to Ereshkigal,
Weigned out their gifts to Namtar,
Weighed out (their) presents to Dimpikug,
Weighed out their bread-offerings to Neti (Nedu),
Weighed out their bread-offerings to Ningishzida and Dumuzi."[118]

The tale of the descent of Inanna, the tutelary deity of Erech, into the netherworld is found on an early Second Millenium tablet from Nippur. It presents a much gloomier view of the underworld, in accordance with its later Akkadian counterpart, "The Descent of Ishtar into the Nether World." Inanna decides to enter the domain of her older sister and inveterate enemy, Ereshkigal, perhaps to wrest the suzerainty of that place from her sister's power and restore the dead to life. Knowing the dangers of this act she instructs her vizier, Ninshubur, to take steps to rescue her if she does not return within three days. She proceeds to the underworld and at each of its gates she is forced to remove an article of clothing or jewellery, till she is brought, naked, before her sister Ereshkigal,

"The pure Ereshkigal seated herself upon her throne,
The Anunnaki, the seven judges, pronounced judgement before her,
They fastened (their) eyes upon her, the eyes of death,
At their word, the word which tortures the spirit,
The sick "woman" was turned into a corpse,
The corpse was hung from a stake."

(The "sick woman" is Inanna.)

When Inanna did not return, Ninshubur did as instructed and as a result of his representations Enki devised a plan to outwit Ereshkigal and free Inanna. She is freed and returns to the upper world accompanied by a host of demons,

"Inanna ascends from the nether world,
The Anunnaki fled,
Who now of the dwellers of the nether world will descend peacefully to the nether world!
When Inanna ascends from the nether world,
Verily the dead hasten ahead of her
Inanna ascends from the nether world,
The small demons like spear-shafts,
The large demons like .....s,
Walked at her side."

(The italicised words are of dubious meaning.)[119]

Formerly the ending of this myth was unknown, but recent decipherment of new tablets has provided the end, which is connected with the descent of Dumuzi, the husband of Inanna to the underworld. Inanna and her ghastly throng go to seek a substitute for her in the underworld, for none can leave unless a substitute has been found to take their place in the nether world. They proceed first to the

two cities of Umma and Bad-tibira, whose deities, Shara and Latarak, humble themselves in dust and ashes before Inanna. She restrains the demons from carrying them off and goes on to Kullab, a district of Erech, whose god is Dumuzi. He, her husband, is dressed in his best, feasting and rejoicing. This enrages Inanna who fixes him with the eye of death and hands him over to the demons. Dumuzi appeals to Utu, the sun-god, who saves him by turning him into a gazelle, but eventually the demons catch up with him and carry him to the underworld.[120]

In the "Epic of Gilgamesh" there is a very clear description of the underworld. With this we turn to the Babylonian texts.

Death is decreed by Anu and Enlil for Enkidu, the friend of Gilgamesh, because he had aided Gilgamesh to slay the Bull of Heaven sent by Ishtar to destroy Gilgamesh because he had spurned her advances of love. As he lies on his death-bed Enkidu is given a vision of the underworld in a dream, he is led thither by some ghastly demon;

"Looking at me, he leads me to the House of Darkness,
The abode of Irkalla,
to the house which none leave who have entered it,
on the road from which there is no way back,
to the house wherein the dwellers are bereft of light,
where dust is their fare and clay their food.
They are clothed like birds, with wings for garments,
and see no light, residing in darkness.
In the House of Dust, which I entered,
I looked at [rulers], their crowns put away;
I [saw princes], those (born to) the crown,
who had ruled the land from the days of yore.

[These doubl]es of Anu and Enlil were serving meat roasts;
They were serving bakemeats and pouring
cool water from the waterskins.
In the House of Dust, which I entered,
reside High Priest and acolyte,
reside incantatory and ecstatic,
reside the laver-anointers of the great gods,
resides Etana, resides Sumuqan.
Ereshkigal [lives there], Queen of the nether world,
[and Belit-]seri, recorder of the nether world, kneels
before her."[121]

Dust, darkness, mud and gloomy shadows are the lot of the powerless shades who are covered in feathers. All men had to go there, regardless of rank, from princes to peasants, from high priests to acolytes. Further on in the tale Gilgamesh has the spirit of Enkidu conjured up from the underworld in order to give him more information about it. This is found on Tablet XII, but the reason for Enkidu's sojourn in the nether world is different from that given above. Gilgamesh has dropped his drum and drumstick (pukku and mikku) into the underworld and Enkidu offers to fetch them back. Enkidu is warned to disguise himself as an unhappy ghost and to eschew any action which would mark him out from the rest of the denizens of the underworld. Enkidu ignores this advice, he dresses well, anoints himself, kisses his wife, makes a noise in the nether world and, of course, is seized by the powers of the nether world and does not return to the upper earth.

"Namtar (i.e. plague) did not seize him, Fever did not
seize him;
the nether world seized him (irṣitu seized Enkidu).

Nergal's unsparing waylayer did not seize him;
the nether world seized him.
On the battle field of men he did not fall;
the nether world seized him!"

Gilgamesh asks the god Ea to help him and Ea persuades the king of the underworld, Nergal, to allow the spirit of Enkidu to ascend to the upper earth;

"Nergal, the valiant hero ⌊hearkened to Ea⌋,
forthwith he opened a hole in the earth.
The spirit of Enkidu, like a wind-puff,
Issued forth from the nether world."[122]

Enkidu then describes to Gilgamesh the conditions in the nether world,

"⌊He who had⌋ one ⌊son⌋, hast thou seen (him)? I have seen (him)
He lies prostrate at ⌊the foot⌋ of the wall (and) weeps
bitterly ⌊ov ⌋er (it)."

The more sons the deceased has, the better his lot.

"He who had five sons, hast thou seen him? I have seen (him).
Like (that of) a good scribe, his arm is bared,
(And) straightway he enters the palace."

But for the unhappy man whose body was left unburied, there is an equally unhappy fate in the underworld;

"He whose body lies (unburied) on the steppe, hast thou seen (him)?
I have seen (him).
His spirit does not rest in the underworld.
He whose spirit has none to take care of him, hast thou seen (him)?
I have seen (him).
What was left over in the pot (and) the pieces of bread that were thrown into the street he eats."[123]

From a seventh century B.C. tablet from Assur comes the vision of an Assyrian prince who, in a dream, descended to the underworld and encountered its rulers and inhabitants. He describes a gloomy and grisly realm, peopled by zoomorphic deities and fearsome demons. He first of all meets Namtar, the vizier of the nether world and then, a little later, Nedu, its chief gate-keeper. Then he reaches the throne of Nergal,

> "When I moved mine eyes, valiant Nergal was seated on a royal throne; his headgear was the crown of royalty; in his two hands he held two wrathful maces ..... the Anunnaki, the great gods, stood bowed to the right and to the left ..... The nether world was filled with terror; before the prince lay utter stillness."

Nergal threatens to kill the prince for being so presumptuous as to seek to enter the realm of his wife, Ereshkigal. The prince is spared by the intervention of Ishmun. He is allowed to return to the upper world with the ominous words of Nergal ringing in his ears,

> "Go (back) to the upper regions, until I bethink me of thee!"[124]

There are several texts in Ebeling which deal with the underworld in the context of rituals for sickness and burial. There is a ritual for a sick man, which Ebeling calls a "Tammuz Text." This is not for the restoration of a man already dead, but simply the healing of a sick man by identifying him with the death and resurrection of Tammuz. The man in this ritual text was beset by demons, an utukku-demon and a saghulhaza-demon.[125] The time appointed for the ritual was the month DUZU, when Ishtar caused the land to weep for Tammuz. The twenty-eightth

day of the month was the day of the sheep-folds, on this day the ritual began. Presents were brought to Ishtar; prayers were made to her for the relief of the afflicted man, at which all the members of his family were present. After the offerings to Ishtar, the shepherd-boy of Tammuz, Ishtariṣua, was also implored to intercede with Tammuz. On the twenty-ninth of the month a bed was placed for Tammuz, offerings and gifts were made to him and to Ishtar, to the ghost of the family, to the Anunnaki and to the shepherd boy of Tammuz. More prayers to Ishtar followed. Then the evil demons were besought to go away and their leader implored to tear them from the body of the sick man and take them back to the underworld. Further prayers to the Anunnaki and to the departed spirits of the family were said, but they are not well preserved. Then directions for the ritual follows. The suffering of the man became the suffering of the god, who was bound in the depths of the underworld and what follows in the ritual is parallel to the fate of the god. The forelock and girdle of the sick man, symbols of his personality, were torn off and thrown into the river, which represented the underworld. For the next three days, the period of time that Tammuz lay in the underworld, the sick man had to eat a special diet. When, after three days, the god returned to the land of the living, then the sick man was saved, through the release of the divine being to whose sufferings and restoration he had been assimilated.[126].

There is a text which relates how a king celebrated the obsequies of his father. After embalming the king in oil (ina ᵾammi ᵾarru), the corpse of the king was laid in a sarcophagus of stone which was sealed with a conjuration. Gold and silver and whatever else pertained to the grave comfort of the king, were laid in the tomb; gifts were made

to the Anunnaki and to the other inhabitants of the nether world. I begin the translation at the third line of the text as the first two are obscure:

"in oil the king (...
I let rest admirably, (.....
the sarcophagus (presumably of stone Akk. aban; the word used is arānu = Heb. ʾārōn)
the place of his resting,
with strong bronze
I sealed its opening,
(I) made strong its conjuration.
Ornaments of gold and silver,
every appurtenance (?) for the grave,
his lordly jewellery,
which he loves,
I let Shamash see,
With the father, my progenitor,
I laid in the burial vault.
Presents for the princes,
the Anunnaki
and the gods who inhabit the underworld, (lit. "earth")
I gifted."

The welfare of the dead man is obviously an important consideration here. Comforts for the grave are given and an attempt is made to influence the gods of the underworld in favour of the deceased. The son of the dead king, tells posterity that he did not neglect the tomb offerings of his father.[127]

Another burial text, which may represent a real or symbolic funeral, gives more information about the underworld. The text is concerned with the burial of the king and his wife in a burial chamber, the lamentations, embalming and anointing.[128] Another similar text mentions Gilgamesh, as a judge in the underworld and the river of the underworld appears. Ishtar and Shamash are also present and before the latter there is some attempt at justification on the part of the deceased.[129]

Ebeling has also translated a great number of rituals for the healing of the sick.[130] I wish only to note one or two of them as they are not of great importance for the theme of this chapter. In the ritual in question the sick man lay on the roof of his house for three days while the exorcism priest sacrificed to Shamash and the stars of the night and recited exorcisms. The demon, which was tormenting the sick man, was then banished into a pot, which was cast out into the desert, this signifying the departure of the demons for the underworld.[131]

In the same group of rituals, one is found for the purpose of exorcising the ghosts of a father or mother who held a man in their grip. Representations of a man and woman were made, no doubt intended to be the father and the mother of the demon-afflicted person; these were hung with ornaments and honours to pacify the deceased. These figures were placed in a model sailing ship which was faced towards the west and then put into the river, signifying the departure of the satisfied spirits to the underworld. Exorcism of the dead troubled the Babylonians a great deal and in another set of rituals there are these lines, expelling the demons from the land of the living;

"They must go distant 3,600 miles (?) from (my) body!
Give them over to Namtar the vizier of the underworld,
They must enter the gate with the Anunnaki, not (return),

they must enter the river Hubur, not turn themselves back,
they must enter the door of the city of the dead, not
(appear) among the living."[132]

Also the following:

"(Give them) into the hand of Namtar, the vizier of the
underworld,
Ningizzida, herald of the wide earth, (make their custody strong),
Nedu, great porter of the underworld, (turn their) face,
let them be torn from among the living,
let them be numbered with the dead ....."[133]

It falls now to summarise what has been learned from the texts about Mesopotamian ideas concerning the underworld, at the risk of repeating one or two things which have already been said.

All the dead went down to the KI-GAL, "the great place," also commonly called irṣitu. The ruler of this grim domain was Ereshkigal. Her husband was Nergal (cf. 2 Kings 17.30). In a Sumerian prayer he is called NE-IRI-GAL,[134] represented in Akkadian by the word namṣaru, which means, "the great sword."[135] He was often identified with Ir-ra, who was a primitive god of plague associated with the planet Mars.[136] At his cult city Cutha, however, he was the god responsible for vegetation and life in nature; there his wife was La-az and his temple, É-MES-LAM, "the house of the great hero."[137] He was also worshipped at Sippar, Kish, Susa in Elam, Tabriz in Assyria, at Mari and at Palmyra; a cylinder seal found at Taanach in Syria bears his name.[138] These two with their vizier, Namtar, their porter, Nedu, the Anunnaki judges and a host of minor deities ruled the land of the dead and its inhabitants.

The plight of those who went there was generally reckoned to be very unhappy. Their fate depended to a great extent on how they were buried and how well their tomb-offerings and libations were regulated in the upper world. The very worst fate that could befall anyone in the Ancient Near East was to remain unburied. To remove bones from a tomb was to deprive a dead person of rest and peace. To cease tomb-offerings meant that the ravenous and thirsty ghost had to rise to terrify the living in his search for sustenance; he was forced to scavenge among the offal in the streets. The dead corpse lay in the tomb and the shade went to the underworld, the bīt ipri, "house of dust," and the bīt ikliti, "the house of darkness."[139] In the underworld the deceased met Gilgamesh, the perfect king and leading judge of the bench of the Anunnaki, who owed his position to Shamash the sun-god and lord of justice in heaven and earth.[140]

Life was not gay in the great city of the dead. It was a waste land, a land of thirst and hunger, which could only be alleviated by those on earth. The desire to have posterity at all was in fact influenced by the fear of having no food and water in the world to come.[141] Channels leading from altars underground were intended, no doubt, to give libations to the ghosts and chthonic deities; such channels were found at more than three hundred tombs at Tello, Larsa and Mari, to pass the drink offerings to the dead.[142] Conquering kings often disturbed the tombs of the conquered. In 639 B.C. Assurbanipal conquered Elam. The sanctuaries were desecrated and the tombs of the Elamite kings violated, in order that punishment might follow them after death, their ghosts being made to suffer from the horrors of restlessness and thirst, through lack of the accustomed food offerings and libations.[143]

According to Mesopotamian thought there were various kinds of return from the underworld. There was the annual return of Tammuz; Ishtar also managed to escape from the realm of her sister, Ereshkigal. Necromancers and exorcists could raise the dead temporarily for the purposes of consultation. When humans were sick they were considered to be in the realm of the dead, but by assimilation to a dying and rising god, they could be, figuratively at least, restored to life. But on the whole, death was regarded with great fear in Mesopotamia, for it brought a summons to the dread underworld, to Nergal and Ereshkigal, the grim Dis and Persephone of Mesopotamian mythology.

CANAAN

In Canaan, as everywhere else, death also disrupted the life of the community. Most of our information about death here must come from the Ugaritic texts found at Ras Shamra in Syria.

The proper burial of the dead was, in this context also, of the highest importance for the safety of the community who had to be protected from the ghastly depredations of the returning ghosts. The mourner sat on the ground, loosened his turban and the knot in his girdle, wallowed in the dust, lacerated his face with his nails, wailed and repeated certain words of lamentation. The dead person was then supposed to go away into the land of the dead.[144]

The evidence about Ugaritic conceptions of death and the nether world is to be mainly gleaned from the Baal Epic. The realm of the dead is denoted in Ugaritic by one word *ʾarṣ* (Akkadian *irṣitu*; Hebrew *ʾereṣ*). There is one passage in particular which uses the word in this way and tells us about the Ugaritic conception of the realm of death:

"Then of a truth do you set your faces
towards the rocks of Trgzz,
towards the rocks of Trmg,
towards the two hills bounding the earth.
Lift up the rock(s) on (your) two hands
(and) the woodland on to (your) two palms,
and go down to the lowest depths
of the earth, be counted with them
that go down into the earth.
Then of a truth do you set
(your) faces ⟨towards Mot son
of El⟩ within his city;
but the throne on which he sits
(is) deep in mire and the land of his heritage
(is) filth, and the lackeys
of El keep watch. Come you not
near to Mot son of El
lest he make you
like a sheep in his mouth
(or) you both be carried away like a kid
in his jaws."[145]

In this passage Baal send his two messengers Gpn. w'Ugr, "Field and Vine," to take a challenging message to the god Mot, in his underworld kingdom. The two messengers are told to set off for the entrance to the underworld, which lies at the mountains on the rim of the world ('ars in line 4 means "earth", not "underworld," for the mountains do not bound the "underworld"). We saw above that ṣadû/hursan, "mountain" was a name for the underworld in Akkadian.

Later we shall also see that in the Old Testament, the underworld was imagined as lying at the base of the world mountains. I see no reason to vocalise the names of the mountains and therefore I have left the names unvocalised; we do not know where they were. Gray also leaves them unvocalised and suggests that they might lie in Anatolia, a reasonable suggestion.[146] The two messengers are instructed to lift a sort of trap-door in the earth and descend to the domain of Mot. In lines 8 and 9 there are the words:

..... tspr . by "Be counted with them
rdm . ʾarṣ that go down into the underworld."

ʾarṣ means nothing other than "underworld" here. yrd is used in Ugaritic in the sense of going to the nether world; we will find a similar use of the cognates ירד and ירד in Hebrew in the Old Testament.

In the lines immediately following there is another conception of the land of the dead, that of a city. The messengers are instructed to set their faces to Mot, son of El tk . qrth, "in the midst of his city." Like Nergal, Mot rules a city. This points at once to the name of the city-god of Tyre, Melcarth, Mlk-qrt, "king of the city." At first sight it might be that the name means nothing more than that the god was the lord of the city of Tyre. Albright has shown, however, that the name "king of the city," refers to the lord of the underworld, in the sense that Melcarth was primarily a chthonic deity. He notes an eighth century B.C. stele set up by Benhadad of Damascus in honour of Melcarth and points out that it is unlikely that an Aramaean king of Syria would erect a stele to the tutelary deity of Tyre.[147] This is by no means a conclusive argument, but in a later publication he has cited much more convincing evidence to show that Melcarth was identified with Nergal.[148]

The domain of Mot was a land of filth and mire, a loathsome realm, in whose murky depths the god sat on a dirty throne. Mot was a monster whose great and powerful jaws were capable of swallowing the messengers who were warned not to approach him too closely. It is of interest to note briefly that Mot seems also to have acted as a sort of corn spirit. For when he is captured by Anat, the sister of Baal, she treats the god like the corn, he is winnowed, burnt, ground and sown in the ground.[149] He may represent the "dead" grain in the earth before it sprouts. However, he is primarily ruler of the land of the dead, adversary of Baal, who had to go into his underworld realm.

When Dnel speaks of what he will do with the body of his son when he finds it he says,

..... <u>ʾabky . wʾaqbrnh . ʾastn</u>

<u>bḫrt . ʾelm . ʾarṣ</u>

" ..... I shall weep and bury him, I shall put him

in the hole of <u>the gods of the underworld."</u>

Aqhat was slain by the goddess Anat, who desired his magic bow. The italics in the English represent my own translation.[150] Gray translates the phrase <u>ʾelm . ʾarṣ</u> as "deities of the earth."[151] It is the underworld which is intended here. Anat buries the dead Baal in a similar place, but this place is situated <u>bṣrrt ṣpʿn</u>, "in the recesses of the north."[152] This may mean that she takes Baal's body to the rim of the world, to the mountains where the entrance to the underworld lies and buries him there. The text is similar to the extract from Aqhat. Anat weeps for Baal, she buries him, setting him in the hole of the gods of the underworld. Thus the entrance to and

exit from the underworld was considered to be by means of a hole in the earth. Presumably every tomb was imagined to lead to the nether world, with the chief entrance lying at the end of the world, at the mountains of the edge of the earth. A further text indicates that the realm of the dead was below the earth:

> "You have done bravely, and I myself do quit
> Ughar for the most distant of gods, Enbab
> for the most distant of ghosts, two layers
> beneath the springs of the earth, three spans
> (under) the rocks (!)"

In this passage Anat congratulates Gnp w'Ugr, the messengers of Baal for their successful venture to the underworld and expresses a desire to visit that realm for herself. The land of the dead lies two layers beneath the springs of the earth and three spans beneath its rocks. Driver suggests that lrḫq 'elnym, which he translates, "most distant of ghosts," might refer to chthonic deities.[153]

There are one or two strangely euphemistic references to the land of the dead, e.g.

> " ..... we two have arrived
> from the pleasant tracts of the land of decease,
> we two have arrived from the fair tracts of the edge of the strand
> of death."

The speakers are Gpn and Ugr who have returned from their visit to the realm of Mot; this reference to his ghastly dwelling may be intended to please him, or it may be ironic.[154]

Like Shamash in the Akkadian texts, Shapash the Canaanite lady sun, acts, in the Ugaritic texts as a sort of go-between journeying from

the land of the living to the land of the dead and vice versa. There is one passage in particular which mentions her descending to the land of the dead, her purpose there was to search for the dead Baal:

" ..... moreover thou verily atest
the bread of corruption, thou verily drankest
the wine of decay (?). O Shapash,
thou verily keptest company with the ghosts.
Gods were around thee, lo! the dead
were around thee; ..... "[155]

A. Caquot mentions this similarity between Shamash and Shapash pointing out that in Akkadian Shamash was the šar eṭimmē, "king of the ghosts." and the bēl mīti, "the lord of the dead."[156] Shapash had access to the realm of the dead in her nightly course and thus she was able to help Anat in her search for Baal.[157] In this respect she may be likened also to the Egyptian sun-god Re, who illumined each of the twelve divisions of the underworld as he journeyed in his night-barque through the twelve hours of the night. Shamash rose in the morning from between the mountain peaks at the edge of the world and thus may be assumed to have come from the underworld for he was the dajjān elāti u šaplāti, "the judge of the upper and underworld."[158]

There are several references to Mot in the guise of a monster with a gaping jaw:

" ..... Even as Mot has
/jaws (reaching)/ to earth, lips to heaven
/and/ a tongue to the stars, Baal
will enter his stomach (and) go down into his
mouth

as the olive, the produce of the earth and the
fruit of the trees,
is swallowed."

In this extract Mot threatens Baal to the effect that he will swallow him.[159]

"..... verily thou must come down
into the throat/
/of Mot son of El, into the miry gorge/
/of the hero loved of El/."

Again Baal is threatened with swallowing by Mot.[160]

These two extracts show Mot as a monster with a gaping gullet into which Baal was forced to descend, but Baal was by no means the only victim:

"Baal seized the sons of Athirat;
he smote (them, though) mighty, with a sword,
smote (them, though) resplendent with a mace,
(and) Mot did gape open (that) they might go
right into the earth."

Perhaps, "right into the underworld," is a better translation.[161]

Thus Mot was the ruler of the underworld, though he does not figure prominently in the offering lists from Ugarit. He was essentially a god whose function was negative, the taunter, the rival and the opponent of Baal, sterility as opposed to fertility. There is also evidence to show that there were other deities connected with the Canaanite underworld.

The most important of these was Reshef. His name appears along with other well-known divinities on the offering lists from Ugarit.[162] He appears, like Nergal, to have had destructive qualities. In the Legend of King Keret, he is credited with destroying by plague one fifth of the offspring of king Keret:

"He (Keret) had offspring of (one) mother.
At three years old they were perfect in health,
At four, princes (all);
At five Reshef, gathered them unto himself."

Reshef is, in Ugaritic rŝp, which can be translated "plague," but most likely denotes here the god of plague.[163] He was principally a god of pestilence and of the underworld. He is to be identified with the Babylonian Nergal. This is confirmed by the discovery of two official lists of the Ugaritic pantheon, one in Ugaritic and one in Akkadian, on the same tablet. Reshef is set opposite Nergal.[164] He was a popular deity in the Egyptian New Kingdom, along with other Syrian divinities which the Ramessides imported. Reshef also appears on an Egyptian funerary stele found at Beth-shan, under the name of Mekal. This stele is dedicated by Pa-Ra-em-heb on behalf of his father Amen-em-apt, both these names are unmistakably Egyptian. The two votaries stand in adoration before the seated Mekal, who grasps in his right hand the ʾankh-symbol of life, and in his left the uas-sceptre symbolising welfare. The god is bearded and wears a tall conical hat, with two streamers, from his forehead there protrude two gazelle horns.[165] That this figure is to be identified with Reshef can be deduced from another stele depicting the same god and naming him as Reshef.[166] In a Phoenician inscription from Karatepe he is called rŝp ṣprm, "Reshef of the Bucks."[167] He was also worshipped in the Aramaean states of Syria in the eighth century B.C.

A further chthonic deity was Horon, who, like Reshef, appears in Egyptian sources from the New Kingdom. Gaster argues that Horon had affinities with Nergal.[168] Albright, however, has indicated that the western counterpart of Nergal was Reshef[169] and he sets Horon in the category of Mot and names him as primarily a chthonic deity.[170] The name is found frequently in the Egyptian Execration Texts from the New Kingdom. Presumably the Palestinian name Beth-horon represents a cult-centre of this deity. Gray regards Horon as a healing deity, following a suggestion of Baudissin, and he connects the god with Eshmun of Sidon, who was, in Greek times, identified with Aesklepios the Greek god of healing. At Beth-horon there was a brazen serpent which may have been connected with healing and we may note that Aesklepios was often pictured with two serpents coiling around his staff.[171] However, in the Papyrus Ermitage and the Magical Papyrus Harris, Horon is linked with Reshef. Further as Hrn-jbn, he was the tutelary deity of Jabneh (Jamnia) and in that capacity the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the town in the third century B.C. called him Ἀυρώνος Aurōnos is identified with Heracles (Melcarth, a chthonic god) on a Greek stele from the island of Delos.[172] Despite all this evidence the character of the god is difficult to define but it may well be that he was a chthonic deity.

In conclusion, it may be noted that some evidence of a Ugaritic lady of the underworld has been brought to light. The bi-lingual tablet which we mentioned above in connection with Reshef and Nergal lists also the Akkadian goddess Allatum, an underworld goddess and sometimes named as the wife of Nergal. For the counterpart of Allatum in Ugaritic, the name (ʾa)rṣ(y) is given, Dhorme in a private communication to Nougayrol, who deals with this tablet, suggests that this word may well be

a name for the Ugaritic goddess of the underworld.[173] She was the third daughter of Baal, but how she arrived in the underworld is not explained.[174] In all likelihood she was the wife of Reshef, as there is no indication of Mot, the chief deity of the Ugaritic underworld, having a wife.

The Ugaritic title _tpt nhr_, "judge river", applied to the sea-god Yam, the _zbl ym_, "prince sea," possibly reflects a myth which stated that there was a trial of souls on the banks of the world-encircling river before they were admitted to the underworld.

It may be concluded from this survey that the mythology of death and the underworld in Canaan, exhibited many of the same characteristics and concepts found in corresponding Mesopotamian mythology, and, to a much lesser extent, in Egyptian mythology.

From this point we move to the Old Testament. This chapter has been by way of introduction and I shall deal more fully with aspects of the Ancient Near Eastern mythology of death which bear upon the subjects of the succeeding chapters more fully in the said chapters, as it is required.

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45. ibid., pp. 158 ff

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76. CAD iv p. 281 eresu

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122. ANET(1) pp. 97 ff Tablet XII Text p. 98 lines 59-61 and 81-83

123. Heidel, op.cit., pp. 100 f Text lines 102-103, 110-112 and 150-153. Heidel's restoration of this tablet, which is difficult and broken in Akkadian, is based on a Sumerian text and therefore the rendering is only probable.

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125. This must be some sort of demon.

126. Ebeling, op.cit., p. 48 f

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128. ibid., p. 60

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Chapter 2

THE LAND OF THE DEAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

One of the most unpleasant aspects of existence in the terms of the Old Testament was premature death. To be cut off in the fullness of life from the community of Israel and from Yahweh its God was a fate regarded with the utmost abhorrence by the men of the Old Testament. The path which led to the land of the dead was one way, there was no hope of a return. Thus the prayer of all men to Yahweh was that he might grant them a long life and keep them out of the sphere of death and out of the land of the dead for as long as possible until old age made a graceful surrender of life imperative.

The tragedy of premature death and the vivid fear of its consequences are very well illustrated in the case of king Hezekiah, found in Isaiah 38. In this chapter may be found the frantic fear of the land of the dead and an almost hysterical grief in the face of the dull aching monotony which life in the country of the shades would bring, cut off from the living and the lord of all life. The prophet Isaiah came to the sick king with a short, sharp message of doom (v. 1):

כה־אמר יהוה צו לביתך כי מת אתה ולא תחיה

"Thus Yahweh speaks, 'Set your house in order, for you are a dead man, you will not live.'"

Hezekiah at once stormed heaven reminding Yahweh of all the good things which he had done. Yahweh, in the end, graciously agreed to restore his life. In verse 21 the prophet Isaiah prescribed a fig fomentation for the offending boil and the king recovered. Verses 10-20 the so-called "Psalm of Hezekiah," were inserted by a later redactor (cf. the "Psalm of Jonah," Jonah 2. 2-9) who considered them appropriate to the plight of Hezekiah. They come from a psalm of lamentation and

embody the despair of one driven to the very gates of the underworld. Most of its themes will be dealt with in the course of this chapter, thus a mere summary will suffice.

Verse 10 consigns the king (accepting the attribution to Hezekiah) to the שערי שאול , "the gates of Sheol (the underworld)." In the following verse the unfortunate king bewails his fate;

לא־אראה יהוה (יה יה not) בארץ החיים

"I shall not behold Yahweh in the land of the living."

Finally the monotony and hopelessness of existence in the underworld are related, verse 18;

כי לא שאול תודך מות יהללך
לא־ישברו יורדי־בור אל־אמתך.

"For Sheol does not thank you, (the land of) death does not laud you.

Those who go down to the Pit do not hope for your faithfulness."

These verses from Isaiah 38 provide a point of departure for the subject of this chapter. I wish now to answer two questions,

(1) What was the underworld called in the Old Testament?

(2) Where did it lie and what were its characteristics?

(1) <u>The names for the underworld</u>

There are several names for the land of the dead in the Old Testament, the majority of which seem to be simply special applications of common nouns in Hebrew, though there are, as we shall see, striking parallels to Mesopotamian and Canaanite usages.

(a) קבר or קבורה is used as a designation for the underworld, e.g. Pss. 5.10 and 88.12. In 5.10 the phrase, קבר פתוח גרונם , "their throat is an open grave," represents the mouth of the enemies as the gaping entrance to

the underworld.

קבר is used in the same sense as the Akkadian gabru, which was employed by the Semitic-speaking Akkadians to translate the Sumerian URU-GAL, "the great place," i.e. the underworld.[1] It must be emphasised at the outset of this enquiry that the grave and Sheol were both very fluid conceptions and tended to merge in meaning with one another; this merging was facilitated by the fact that the underworld was considered sometimes as a vast grave where all the dead reposed.

(b) שחת is found very frequently meaning the underworld, (Is. 38.17; 51.14: Ezek. 28.8: Jonah 2.7: Psalms 16.10; 38.10; 49.10; 103.4: Job 33.18, 22, 24, 28, 30). In all these cases שחת means "the pit" in the sense of the underworld. The word may well be connected with the Akkadian šuttu, "pit," which meant both grave and underworld.[2] שחת can also, in Hebrew, mean both grave and underworld. Both K-B[3] and BDB[4] derive שחת from שוח, "to sink down." Whatever its derivation, from the contexts in which it is employed it is perfectly clear that the word may indicate both the underworld and the individual grave, it is normally translated as "pit."

(c) בור, means a pit, cistern or well and may be linked to the Akkadian būru, "pit". Tallqvist notes two phrases where būru signifies "underworld," šubat būri, "the dwelling of the underworld," and māt bi-ru-tu, "the deep land," i.e. the underworld.[5]

This word is used only in the poetic parts of the Old Testament, e.g. Is. 14. 15, 19; 38. 18: Ezekiel 26. 20; 28. 8; 31. 14, 16; 32. passim: Pss. 28. 1; 30. 4; 88. 7: Prov. 1. 12. I shall comment in due course on the frequent use of the phrase יורדי בור

"those who go down to the pit." This phrase is parallel to the Ugaritic yrdm'arṣ In the following extract Baal is asked by Mot to go down into the underworld and,

. . . . . tspr by

rdm . 'arṣ

"Be counted with those who go down into the underworld."[6]

Later on in the tale when Anat, the sister/wife of Baal is seeking for him, she asks Shapash, the sun-goddess, to accompany her to the underworld, nrd b'arṣ, "Let us go down into the underworld," she says.[7]

(d) ארץ, earth; this common word is also used to signify the underworld. In this respect it corresponds to its cognates 'arṣ, in Ugaritic, and irṣitu, in Akkadian, both of which can mean the nether world, as has been shown at length.[8] This striking uniformity of usage in all three languages underlines the wisdom of setting the Old Testament against its environment.

ארץ is used frequently in the phrase ארץ תחתיות "the deep land, the underworld," (Is. 44. 23: Ezek. 32. 18, 24: Pss. 63. 10; 139. 15, in this latter case it may merely mean the deep places of the earth, not necessarily the underworld.) In Ezek. 32 and Psalm 63, the phrase ארץ תחתיות is set over against the ארץ חיים, "the land of the living."

In Ps. 88.7 there is the phrase בור תחתיות which means, "the deep pit," and is to be regarded as a synonym for ארץ תחתיות. The latter phrase corresponds exactly in meaning to the Akkadian irsitu šaplītu, "the land below." The Babylonian earth had three layers:

1. The upper earth, on which men dwelt, the irṣitu elītu.
2. The irṣitu qablītu. lit. "the middle earth," the domain of Ea, the Sumerian En-ki, the lord of the earth.
3. The irṣitu šaplītu, "the lower world," the underworld, the dwelling-place of the Anunnaki gods, this was the land of the dead.[9]

It is this third layer of the Babylonian earth which corresponds to the Hebrew אֶרֶץ הַתַּחְתִּיּוֹת.

(e) שְׁאוֹל , this word appears sixty-six times in the Old Testament and always without the article. Older commentators such as Gressman, Beer and Hölscher regarded Sheol as a proper name, like תְּהוֹם , "the deep," perhaps signifying a goddess of the underworld.[10] The word is not often used in prose but it may be found in the following places, Gen. 37.35; 42.38; 44.29,31, all connected with Jacob and in Num. 16.30. The etymology and the derivation of the word are both rather obscure. Neither BDB nor K-B offer very much help in this respect.

Older scholars, among them Jastrow, connected with an Assyro-Babylonian word, šu'âlu, which they thought meant a place where an oracle could be obtained.[11] Albright said that no such word existed and proffered a completely different explanation. He attempted to derive the word שְׁאוֹל from the Babylonian šu'āra, the name of the dwelling-place of Tammuz in the underworld; the word then came to mean the underworld itself.[12]

This interpretation is taken up and expanded considerably by Baumgartner.[13] He says that šu'āra is a changed form of the place-name šubāru. Subaru, however, has nothing to do

with the North Mesopotamian province of the same name, but is the name of three cities in Mesopotamia. The best known of the cities which bore this name lay in south Mesopotamia and was an early centre of the cult of Tammuz. Like Cutha, the cult seat of Nergal, šubāru was located in the underworld, in which Tammuz, as a vegetation deity, spent a period of his existence. The word šu'āra appears in Tallqvist as a name for the underworld.[14] Thus, says Baumgartner, the word šu'āra was used to designate the underworld in Mesopotamia. To make possible the transition from šu'āra to שְׁאוֹל a form šu'ālu must be postulated. This proffers no real difficulty, the alteration of r to l is a common feature in the field of Semitic philology, Akkadian r to West-Semitic l. To sum up, Baumgartner derives Sheol from šu'āra, a name for the underworld in Akkadian, more precisely the location of the dwelling of Tammuz. If we accept this explanation then שְׁאוֹל like, גּוֹר , מָוֶת and אֶרֶץ fits into the Near Eastern pattern of names for the land of the dead.

In another article in the same periodical, the same year, L. Köhler attempts to derive שְׁאוֹל from the verb שָׁאָה , "to be waste," l being a structural element.[15] It has also been suggested that the word comes from שָׁאַל , "to inquire," in the more specific sense of consultation of the dead. But it is used only once in this respect in I Samuel 28.6,16.

While noting all these efforts at derivation it seems simpler to accept the fact that in the Old Testament שְׁאוֹל is a proper name, feminine and means the place where the dead dwell, nothing further. It is also by far the most common designation of the underworld. It is of interest to note that שְׁאוֹל does not occur in Ugaritic, Phoenician or Punic, at least, as far as we know. It is not clear how the word became so predominant in Israelite use.

The underworld is sometimes known as a house, a waste or a miry bog, but these are at most passing references and do not merit special mention, though they will be dealt with when they occur in the text.

(2) The Location and Characteristics of the Land of the Dead

A. Job

3.13-19: In the previous chapter a passage was quoted from the "Epic of Gilgamesh," which described the underworld and those doomed to lie for ever in its depth, priests, kings and commoners alike.[16] This passage in Job bears a striking similarity to the one in "Gilgamesh" in form and content.

13. כי-עתה שכבתי ואשקוט ישנתי אז ינוח לי

"By now I would be lying in peace, I would be asleep and at rest."

כי עתה, means, "by now," (cf. also Exodus 9.15 where Yahweh tells pharaoh through the agency of Moses, "By now כי-עתה I could have sent plagues, etc. ...") Job makes the remark that, if he had died at birth or been aborted, (vss. 11, 12 and 16 taken to together sic BH) "by now I would be lying in peace."

LXX has, νῦν ἂν κοιμηθεὶς ἡσύχασα

"now I would be lying in peace."

Vulgate,

nunc enim dormiens silerem et somno meo requiescerem,

"For now sleeping I would be silent and in my sleep I would be at rest."

שכב alludes to those who sleep death's sleep in the tomb, death is a sleep. שׁוּן also represents the sleep of death (cf. also Ps. 13.4). The thought of the rest of death evokes the idea of the tomb, for it is there alone, according to Job, that man is truly at peace. After contemplation of his own sleep in the tomb, Job is

led to consider those others who also sleep the last great sleep. Fohrer, in his commentary, thinks that this representation of death as a sleep owes something to Egyptian as well as to Mesopotamian thought.[17] This is very possibly true, but the background of this passage would seem to lie in Mesopotamia rather than in Egypt.

14. עם־ מלכים ויעצי ארץ הבנים חרבות למו

"With kings and counsellors of the earth, who built solitary tombs for themselves."

Tur Sinai says that מלכים does not refer to living monarchs, but to the primeval heroes now resting in Sheol.[18] There is, however, no evidence for this interpretation. The kings and counsellors are merely the deceased rulers and great men of the earth.

חרבות has occasioned some considerable difficulty to commentators, both older and more recent. Hölscher retains MT, but thinks that the writer of Job may have had in mind the pyramids of Egypt, Egyptian mr. He further argues that חרבות may have been a term employed by the Egyptian Jews to denote pyramids.[19] I cannot find any evidence to bear this out. Fohrer thinks that the term denotes the pyramids which had fallen into ruin, noting that even Rameses II had used the pyramid complex at Giza as a stone quarry for his own massive building programmes.[20] Driver and Gray emend MT to הרמות from the Arabic hirām, a pyramid.[21] This, however, requires the emendation of two consonants ה for ח and מ for ב. They also say that hirām may be of Egyptian origin.

Dhorme lists other suggestions which have been offered, e.g. ארמנות, "palaces," קברות עלם, "graves of eternity." Both of these require alteration of the consonantal text. It seems easier to turn to Mesopotamian sources. In Tallqvist we find that harbu, "a ruin," is used as a name for the underworld,

bringing out its character as a waste and desolate place.[22] Dhorme points out that in Assyrian huribtu and hurbatu mean desert.[23] Syriac has ܚܪܒ̈ܬ , "ruins." LXX is of no help,

οἱ ἐχαυχιῶντο ἐπὶ ξίφεσιν

"Who exulted in (their) swords," obviously reading חרבות as the plural of חרב , a sword.

The Vulgate has, qui aedificant sibi solitudines, "Who built for themselves solitary places."

It seems, therefore, if we accept the Akkadian harbu and the Assyrian hurbatu, as denoting waste places and, in the case of the former, the abode of the dead, we should look for some such meaning of חרבות . In Isaiah 48.21 the word does mean "desert places," though there is no suggestion of tombs. The Vulgate solitudines seems to imply tombs in solitary places. We know, for example, that tombs in Egypt and Mesopotamia were often, for security reasons, built in desert spots. The pyramids were constructed on the west bank of the Nile, accessible only by boat. The tombs in the Theban Necropolis, set in the range of hills to the west of Thebes were intended to be more secure than the pyramids had proved themselves to be; but they suffered the same plundering. Mesopotamian royal tombs were often set in the western desert far from cities. With all this in view it seems best to retain MT and translate "solitary tombs," indicating that we are dealing with funerary remains which had been built in desert or waste places. Pope mentions the fact that Mesopotamian kings often boasted that they had repaired the ruins of former generations.[24] Nabonidus restored the temple of the moon-god, Nanna/Suen at Haran. However, I consider the funerary aspect of the verse essential and I do not accept Pope's suggestion.

15. או עם־שרים זהב להם המלאים בתיהם כסף

"Or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver."

This verse is, very probably, a reference to the famous wealthy tombs of Egypt and Mesopotamia, which were a tempting and seemingly easy prey to grave-robbers, despite their careful sealing and the powerful curses by which they were protected. The wealthy kings and heroes of a past time have exactly the same fate as the stricken Job envisages for himself. Despite the fact that these great men filled their houses (i.e. tombs) with silver, their fate was to be no different from that of Job. It could be argued that בתים mean earthly palaces, but from the context it would seem that tomb is perhaps intended. The tombs of the great are filled with grave comforts for the hereafter.

/verse 16, with BH, is best inserted after verse 12, in the context of birth and premature birth/

The next three verses describe the peaceful condition of the dead in the tomb, especially those who have known misery during their earthly lives.

17. שם רשעים חדלו רגז ושם ינוחו יגיעי כח

"There the wicked disturb the peace no more; there those who have no strength are at rest."

שם , "there," i.e. in the nether world.

רגז , is used basically of physical disturbance, but may denote wrath, grief and even terror.[25]

BH and Tur Sinai suggest that we should read רעשים , "the tremblers," in place of רשעים , "the wicked."[26] But all Versions support MT, which reads perfectly well.

Those who in life have caused disturbance and upset and those whose strength was so weak that they could not trouble anyone are both at rest in the grave. The sense of this verse denotes the physical rather than the emotional; strength as opposed to weakness.

18. יחד אסירים שאננו לא שמעו קול נגש

"The prisoners enjoy ease and security together, they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster."

It would seem that prison and hard labour went together in the Ancient World.

שאנן is the Pal ' el of שאן , used in Jeremiah 30:10 of Jacob (Israel) returning from captivity and having rest. In 46.27 of the same book, it is employed in a similar context and in 48.11 the word is used of Moab. In Proverbs 1.33 it is used to depict the ease which the man who obeys the dictates of the wisdom teacher will find. In this verse it means that even prisoners condemned to hard labour in this life will find ease in the underworld where the bawling voice of the taskmaster is forever silent.

19. קטן וגדול שם הוא ועבד חפשי מאדניו

"The small and the great are there and the slave is free from his master."

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperium tabernas
Regumque turres. O beate Sesti
Vitae summa brevis, spem nos vitat inchoare longam,
Iam te premet nox, fabulaeque Manes.

"Pale death strikes with equal foot at the hovels of the poor and the towers of kings. O happy Sestius, the sum of one short life forbids us to cherish a long hope, now the night bears down on thee, and the fabled Shades."

/Horace Odes I iv 13 ff/

Everyone is reduced to the same condition of inanition, there are no distinctions of rank in the underworld. The whole passage is as follows:-

> "For now I would be lying in peace, I would have slept and been at rest;
> With kings and counsellors of the earth who built solitary tombs for themselves,
> Or with princes who had gold; who filled their houses with silver.
> There the wicked disturb the peace no more; there those who have no strength left are at rest.
> The prisoners enjoy ease and security together, they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.
> The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master."

In this extract the land of the dead is likened to a vast tomb. where all men, no matter what their sort of condition in life, sleep the eternal sleep of death. The extract from the "Epic of Gilgamesh," recorded the population of the underworld, high priests and acolytes, kings and commoners and all the personnel of the temple and the court. In sharp contrast to the Babylonian account of the underworld, this extract from Job radiates a sense of peace and rest. There is no mention of dust, clay and darkness, rather the peace of the sleep of death is emphasised. For the agonised Job, tormented both by bodily disease and spiritual anguish, death would be as beautiful as sinking into a deep, rich and dreamless sleep, while the tumult of the world and the carping voices of his friends gradually decreased and ultimately vanished. Kings, counsellors, prisoners and slaves all sleep together in the vast communal tomb which is the underworld.

There are further resemblances in Job to the Mesopotamian underworld and to the accounts which we find of it in the literature of Mesopotamia. There the underworld is seen as a place of no return, a land of darkness, thirst and filth. There are some further verses in Job which evoke a similar picture.

7.9. כלה ענן וילך כן יורד שאול לא יעלה

"As a cloud which is dispersed never comes together again, but fades completely, so a man who goes down to Sheol does not come up again."

Fohrer says that this image is representative of the early morning cloud of Palestine, which is dispersed by the heat of the rising sun, a natural phenomenon seen frequently.[27] We noted in the previous chapter the use of the Akkadian words elûm and wrd (Hebrew עלה and ירד) in the context of ascending from and descending to the underworld, e.g.

dIštar ana KI-tim ūrid ul ilâ

"Ishtar has gone down to the underworld and has not come up,"[28] /Ishtar was fortunate in that she managed to escape, for normally there was no return from the nether world./

This verse in Job points out that the dead man vanishes like an evaporated cloud and is never seen again.

7.10 continues the theme of the finality of descent to the underworld,

לא־ישוב עוד לביתו ולא־יכירנו עוד מקמו

"He does not return to his house again and his dwelling place sees him no more."

10.21 f outline again the irreversible doom of death and introduce the characteristic of darkness to the underworld.

10.21 בטרם אלך ולא אשוב אל־ארץ חשך ושלמות

"Before I go (whither) I shall not return, to a land of darkness and deep shadow."

Like the Akkadian irṣit lâ tarî, "the land of no return," the Hebrew Sheol claimed its victims for ever, for no man emerged from its darkness and shadow into the light of the land of the living.

22. ארץ עיפתה כמו אפל צלמות ולא סדרים
ותפע כמו-אפל

"A land of blackness, where there is no order and whose light is darkness (lit. where it shines as gloom)."

This is rather a difficult verse, from a textual point of view. Hölscher thinks that the whole verse ought to be deleted as he regards it as merely an expansion of verse 21.[29] This is not, to my mind at least, an entirely accurate or satisfying solution, for the verse does add something to the preceding verse and, as Dhorme says, it should be remembered that the writers of the Ancient East liked to accumulate typical detail in their descriptions of the nether world.[30]

סֵדֶר , is a word which normally occurs only in the plural and means according to BDB, "arrangement or order." The verse does seem to be textually rather overloaded and following Dhorme, who removes the first כמו אפל and also צלמות , as being redundant, I read the verse as,[32]

ארץ עיפתה ולא סדרים ותפע כמו-אפל

(following the translation as above).

Tur Sinai offers an interesting, but rather speculative explanation of this verse. He says that סדרים has not been correctly understood by commentators. The word stands for order against the powers of darkness; but the darkness of Sheol is a darkness against which no order will avail. He further suggests that עיפתה

is a word denoting demons of the night, " ēphatha-demons," which rise from Sheol to terrify sleepers in the land of the living. Against these demons סדרים ("incantations" according to Tur Sinai) are made, but the darkness of Sheol is so powerful that no incantations can dispel its gloom.[33] While I think that he is correct in arguing that chaotic elements inhere in the darkness of the underworld and that this is reflected in the vocabulary of verses 21 and 22, I do not think that there is any real evidence to substantiate his explanation of the two words עיפתה and סדרים which simply mean "darkness" and "order."

These two verses point to a place of darkness and gloom, where there is a hint of the ever-present powers of chaos ready to break through. The underworld is the antithesis of ordered life, death always brings disorder in its train and the land of the dead is a place where any attempt at ordered life is completely impossible. These verses also sound a note of hopelessness and monotony amid the unrelieved darkness and unremitting gloom. It must be admitted that the picture painted by 10.21,22 is somewhat at variance with the rest and peace of the tomb described in 3. 13-19.

The next two sections which merit consideration are 16.22 and 17 13-16; the former speaks again of the journey to the country of the dead and the latter of the house of dust.

16.22 כי שנות מספר יאתיו ואנה לא־אשוב אהלך

"For a few years have still to pass and then I shall make a journey from which there is no return."

This reference to the brevity of life and the impending doom of death agrees very well with the style and aspect of Job. "Years of number," mean the years left to Job which are so few that they can be counted.

ארח לא אשוב is comparable to the Akkadian phrase uruh lâ târi, "the path from which there is no return (lit. "the path of no returning)."[34] Short is life and the path to death one way only.

17.13 אם־אקוה שאול ביתי בחשך רפדתי יצועי

"If my expectation of a home is Sheol and I spread my bed in darkness."

For the first hemistich LXX has,

Ἐὰν γὰρ ὑπομείνω ᾅδης μοῦ ὁ οἶκος

"For if I remain, Hades is my home." Dhorme says that LXX isolated Ἐὰν γὰρ ὑπομείνω from ᾅδης μοῦ ὁ οἶκος and that this agrees with the substance of MT as, according to Dhorme,[35] אם־אקוה is an interrogative phrase, sic, "Can I hope again? Sheol is my home." It seems, however, preferable to regard אם as applying to both verses 13 and 14, which contain a series of conditional clauses.

Dhorme also notes the Arabic rifadah, "cushion," in connection with רפד which literally means to spread out the cushions which made up the "beds" in the Ancient Near East.[36] Job indicates that Sheol is the place of darkness.

14. לשחת קראתי אבי אתה אמי ואחתי לרמה

"(If) I cry to the Pit, 'you are my father,' to the worms, 'my mother and my sisters.' "

שחת here means "grave (individual)" rather than underworld. Yet again it may be emphasised that in these verses the individual grave stands alongside the underworld, which, in Job, is conceived of as a vast communal grave, as in 3.13–19. The picture is of the grave, dark and dank, alive with worms and maggots which will destroy the body.

15. ואיה אפו תקותי ותקותי מי ישורנה

"Where, then, is my hope and who will see my good?"

For the second תקותי the LXX has τὰ ἀγαθά μου , "my good," in the sense of well-being or happiness. Thus, it is possible to emend MT to טובתי , the second תקותי being explained as a scribal error.

Job feels that he is already in the sphere of the underworld, the grave is his father, the maggots and the worms his mother and sisters. He can have no more happiness or hope in the land of the living.

16. בדי שאול תרדנה אם יחד על-עפר נחת

"Will they go down to Sheol with me or do we descend together into the dust?"

LXX has, Ἢ μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς ᾅδην καταβήσονται, ἢ ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ χώματος καταβησόμεθα.

"Will they do down with me to Hades, or shall we go down together into the tomb."

On the strength of LXX, Hölscher, BH and Driver and Gray all emend בדי to הֲיֵרְדוּ , "do with me ....." (ἢ μετ' ἐμοῦ).[37]

Dhorme thinks, in contrast to these others, that the LXX ἢ μετ' ἐμοῦ stems from a Hebrew אֵצֶל , "by the side of (Assyrian ina idi)."[38]

It is probable that the interrogative had fallen out and ה and ד had become inverted. Following Dhorme, then, it seems satisfactory to read הֲבִידִי לִי lit. "is it that by my side they go down to Sheol ~~with me~~?" There is not much alteration of the consonantal text involved and the new reading accords with the LXX, though in all fairness it may be argued that the LXX was merely smoothing out the difficult MT.

But, all things considered, the suggestion of Dhorme is by no means unreasonable.

The plural תִּרְדֹּנָה refers to the "hope" and "good" of verse 15. LXX καταβησόμεθα in the second hemistich would seem to indicate יֵרְדוּן , "we go down," rather than יֵרְדוּ of MT.

> "If my expectation of a home is Sheol and I spread my bed in darkness:
>
> (If) I cry to the Pit, 'you are my father,' to the worms, 'my mother and my sisters'.
>
> Where, then, is my hope and who will see my good?
> Will they go down to Sheol with me, or do we descend together into the dust?"

In these verses (17.13-16) Job feels himself already in the sphere of the underworld with its darkness and dust (both features of the Mesopotamian underworld). The grave has taken the place of his living relations, who can mean nothing more to him as he enters the sphere of the dead, where there can be neither hope nor happiness.

The remaining two verses in Job which have a bearing on the subject of this chapter are 30.23 and 38.17.

30.23 כִּי יָדַעְתִּי מָוֶת תְּשִׁיבֵנִי וּבֵית מוֹעֵד לְכָל-חָי

> "For I know that you will bring me to death, to the house of assembly for all who are alive."

Fohrer suggests the vocalisation וּבַיִת מוּעָד for וּבֵית מוֹעֵד and translates, "and that a grave (lit. house) is appointed for all living beings," (לְכָל-חָי).[39] This alteration of the

vowels of MT is quite unnecessary, for the verse states that it is the underworld which is the "house of assembly for all who are alive." Thus the underworld is depicted as a vast dwelling to which all men must ultimately go.

Death מות may perhaps be a personified figure in this verse, one of the powers of the nether world. Pope would have the word signify the Canaanite god of the underworld, Mot.[40] Both these suggestions are not needed, מות is intended to be the underworld which is then further qualified by being described as the house of assembly for all who are alive. Job feels that God is leading him to the underworld, the house of death to which all living must ultimately go.

38.17 הנגלו לך שערי־מות ושערי צלמות תראה

"Have the gates of death been revealed to you or have you seen the portals of darkness?"

LXX has, for the second hemistich, πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου ἰδοντες σε ἔπτηξαν ; "did the gatekeepers of Hades quake when they saw you?"

This is obviously a paraphrase of the Hebrew text, but it is, nonetheless, of the greatest interest to note the use of the word πυλωροί "gatekeepers." The gates to the underworld in Mesopotamian and Egyptian thought were guarded by deities or demons who challenged all who wished to pass through them. The gates were usually seven in number. LXX has retained this idea of gatekeepers, while MT has no reference to them. In this MT is supported by the Vulgate which has, Numquid apertae tibi sunt portae mortis et ostia tenebrosa vidisti?

"Have the gates of death been opened to you and have you seen the dark portals?"

Thus it is preferable to retain MT, as there is no other evidence in the Old Testament for the mythological reference to "gatekeepers". However, behind this verse there lies the conception of the vast city of the dead, with its well-guarded portals through which all men must in the end pass, but back through which they can never return.

In verse 16 of the same chapter the question is asked,

הבאת עד־נבכי־ים ובחקר תהום התהלכת׃

"Have you entered the sources of the sea, or have you walked about in the innermost parts of the deep?"

In these two verses, 16 and 17, there is the idea that the underworld must be reached by way of the ocean. This theme will be expanded in a later chapter.[41]

In the Book of Job for the most part, in contrast to Isaiah and Ezekiel, the land of the dead is a place of rest, silence and equality. The denizens of the underworld do not speak, they have all been reduced to the same condition of eternal silence, great and small alike have come to dust. In the book the confusion between the individual grave and the vast Sheol can be seen; a confusion which exists throughout the whole of the Old Testament, as each tomb was seen as a separate entrance to the underworld. Thus Pedersen says,

"The individual grave is not an isolated world, it forms a whole with the graves of the kinsmen who make a common world and are closely united."

He further says that the idea of Sheol and the grave cannot be separated. Everyone who dies goes to Sheol, just as every individual is put in the grave. The dead are at the same time in the grave and in Sheol, not in two different places. The relation between Sheol and the grave cannot be unravelled according to our conception of space. Sheol is

the entirety into which all graves are merged: but no more than the other entities which fill up the Israelite world of ideas, is it a result of a summing up of all the single parts. Where there is the grave there is Sheol and vice versa. This merging will be continually noted.[42]

The portrait of Sheol which the book of Job gives is often no more than that of a large communal grave where all sleep the last sleep of death. However in 10.21,22 there was a hint of dread of the land of darkness and gloom where the forces of chaos are present. The underworld is also a place of dust and a place from which there can be no return, it is the last assembly point for all humanity.

As we noted, the resemblance to Mesopotamian sources is very striking. The writer of this book must have been closely acquainted with a tradition which transmitted those ideas to him, the method of transmission is not our concern here. It may be concluded that the writer of Job believed that there was a dark and dusty underworld awaiting Job if he were to die. He uses his material skilfully to build up his picture of the nether world. It is significant that though Mesopotamian material is used, its use is austere and well-controlled. The descriptions of the underworld in Job are totally lacking in the somewhat baroque imagery in which Babylonian works on the same subject abound.

B. Isaiah

14. 4b-21

This passage is in effect a taunt-song against the king of Babylon. The verses which deal with the underworld are 9-21. Verses 4b-8 form an introduction which tells the reader that the fury of the oppressor, i.e. the king of Babylon, has ceased because Yahweh has broken the staff

of the wicked and the sceptre of the rulers who persecuted the earth and its peoples relentlessly. The whole earth is now at rest and quiet and the sound of joyful singing רָנָּה is heard. Even cypresses and cedars of Lebanon rejoice because there are no more expeditions to cut them down, for use in the domains of the Babylonian tyrant.[43] Verse 9 describes the agitation of Sheol as the doomed tyrant descends into the underworld.

שְׁאוֹל מִתָּחַת רָגְזָה לָךְ לִקְרָאת בּוֹאֶךָ
עוֹרֵר לָךְ רְפָאִים כֹּל-עַתּוּדֵי אָרֶץ
הֵקִים מִכִּסְאוֹתָם כֹּל מַלְכֵי גּוֹיִם

"The depths of Sheol are in a turmoil on your account,
to meet you as you arrive.
It rouses the shades, all who were leaders on the earth
to meet you:
It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones."

If the upper earth is now secure in peace and quiet after the downfall of the king of Babylon, the underworld is in a ferment as he sinks into its depths. Duhm, in the days before the treasures of Ugarit came to light, suggested that Sheol is depicted as a living being in this verse, some sort of monster.[44] We saw that Mot, the monstrous Canaanite god of the nether world had his filthy realm in the bowels of the earth.[45] If this theory is to be accepted, then it must be reconciled with the grammar of the verse.

There are, in the verse, three verbs: the first of these is רָגְזָה a Qal Perfect 3rd pers. sing. fem., whose subject must be the feminine noun שְׁאוֹל . The two other verbs are עוֹרֵר , Polel perf. 3rd pers. sing. masc. of עוּר , "to arouse," and הֵקִים , Hiphil perf. 3rd pers. sing. masc. of קוּם , "to rise."

These verbs are both masculine singular, though there is no masculine singular noun. Most modern translations regard Sheol as the subject of the whole verse.

RSV "It rouses the shades to greet you
all who were leaders of the earth,
it raises from their thrones
all who were kings of the nations."

JB "To honour you he rouses the ghosts
of all the rulers of the world.
He makes all the kings of the nations
get up from their thrones."

NEB "She roused the ancient dead to meet you,
all who had been leaders on earth;
she made all who had been kings of the nations
rise from their thrones."

The "he" of JB is gramatically correct, but it cannot refer to Sheol, which is a feminine noun and it is by no means clear what it should refer to. The translators of NEB have assumed that Sheol is referred to throughout the verse, but have ignored the fact that apart from הֵקִים all the verbs are masculine, and Sheol is normally conjugated with a feminine verb, e.g. Isaiah 5.14. The "it" of RSV is the most satisfactory on all counts. It seems to me that what is intended here is a portrayal of the ability of the monstrous power of the underworld to agitate those who are in its depths. רְפָאִים in this verse is neither wholly "monster" nor yet merely "underworld", there are hints of both. The king of Babylon descends to Sheol, the underworld, whose ~~innards~~ inner regions, i.e. the monster's, become agitated and disturb those who already dwell in its depths.

In verse 10 the shades address the tyrant,

כלם יענו ויאמרו אליך
גם אתה חלית כמונו אלינו נמשלת

"They all speak with one voice, they say to you,
'You, too, are reduced to impotence like us,
you are in a similar condition to us.'"

The shades already in the underworld mock the king of Babylon as he joins their ranks. Impotent themselves, they gloat over one, formerly strong, who has become one of their sort and condition. They take a perverse pleasure in their own misery by enjoying the misfortune and fall of another. Verse 11 continues their mockery;

הורד שאול גאונך המית נבליך
תחתיך יצע רמה ומכסיך תולעה

"Your dignity (and) the sound of your lyres are brought down to Sheol; worms are your ground-sheet and maggots your covers."

The representation of a body in a tomb intrudes here. Though the tyrant has been brought down into the underworld he is also seen as lying rotting in a grave, with worms beneath him and maggots above him. The individual grave is found often alongside Sheol, which, as we saw in Job, was sometimes considered to be a vast grave, where all the dead dwelt. Duhm thinks that the fact of the king of Babylon lacking a throne degrades the hated enemy and that the author is using poetic licence to make his point.[46] But the king of Babylon is no worse off than the others, like all the kings of the earth, he has, eventually to die and pass to the underworld. It is wrong to expect consistency in such a passage as this, which is poetic and where various

representations of the underworld stand alongside one another, all drawn in by the author to heighten the literary effectiveness of the whole section. It might be replied to Duhm that, as the king of Babylon has only just arrived in the underworld, there has been no time to assign him a throne!

In verse 12 and the verses immediately following traces of Canaanite mythology are very evident. That these mythological fragments owe their origin to Canaanite belief is clearly indicated by the new material on Canaanite religion which the discoveries at Ugarit have brought to light.[47] The key to the interpretation of these few verses is found in the phrase הֵילֵל בֶּן שָׁחַר .[48]

12. אֵיךְ נִפַּלְתָּ מִשָּׁמַיִם הֵילֵל בֶּן־שָׁחַר
נִגְדַּעְתָּ לָאָרֶץ חוֹלֵשׁ עַל־גּוֹיִם

"How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn.
How you are cut down to the ground, you who brought the nations low."

There is no need to alter the vocalisation of הֵילֵל to הֵילֶל as BH suggests. Grelot retains the vocalisation הֵילֵל connecting it with the Akkadian ellitu, "shining."[49] This epithet is often applied to Ishtar, Ištar el-litum, "shining Ishtar"[50] (cf. Akkadian ekallu from the Sumerian É-GAL, "the great house" - Hebrew הֵיכָל, "temple"). Thus הֵילֵל is, "the shining one".

BH following Duhm, Marti and Gunkel, suggests the insertion of אֵיךְ before נִגְדַּעְתָּ in 12b, metri causa.[51] The second אֵיךְ could well have fallen out due to haplography. It would seem, therefore, reasonable to insert it and I have translated accordingly sic,

The question which must now be answered is, "Who was הי׳ לל בן - שחר ?" The word hll appears in the Ugaritic texts as the father of the Kathirat;

'aṯr 'elht ktrt bn

t hll . snnt . bnt h

ll bʿl gml .....

"I sing the goddesses, the Kathirat, the shining daughters of the crescent moon, the daughters of the crescent moon, lord of the sickle, ... "[52]

The Kathirat also appear in the legend of Aqhat where they enter the house of Danel and, apparently, after they have eaten and drunk they restore Danel's fertility.[53] Their father is hll, which Driver translates as "the crescent moon." bʿl gml is a hapax legomenon in the Ugaritic texts. In this connection Driver notes the Akkadian gamlû, "a boomerang."[54] Grelot, however, says that no positive solution can be found for the phrase hll bʿl gml, for it is by no means certain that hll is in fact the crescent moon.[55] For bʿl gml Gordon suggests the Akkadian bēl gamli, "lord of the sickle," this may or may not refer to the crescent moon.[56] It would seem, therefore, that hll, about which no-one is really certain, can have little or no bearing on the meaning of הי׳ לל בן - שחר in this passage.

Shachar is, in Canaanite mythology, the masculine divinity of the dawn.[57] This divinity is found in Phoenician theophoric names.[58] Grelot attempts to find a parallel between a hypothetical astral myth of Hll ben Šaḥar and the Greek myth of Phaeton, the son of Eos and the Charioteer of the dawn.

Now it must be clearly emphasised at this point that there were two distinct mythological personages both bearing the name of Phaeton in Greek mythology.

(1) Phaeton, son of Helios, the sun-god was a youth who desired to drive the sun's chariot, i.e. the chariot of his father. He wanted to do this in order to show off before his two sisters, Prote and Clymene. His mother, Rhode, also known as Clymene, a nymph, pleaded his case with his father, Helios. He was allowed to drive the chariot but soon lost control of the mettlesome steeds which hauled the car through the sky; first of all he rose too high and then descended so low that he began to scorch the earth. The enraged Zeus hurled a thunderbolt to destroy him.[59] Phaeton is also an allegorical name for the planet Venus.[60]

(2) The second Phaeton was the son of Cephalus, who was the husband of Procris the daughter of the Athenian king Erechtheus, and Eos the goddess of the dawn, brother of Helios; Cephalus had deserted Procris to wed Eos though only after discovering that Procris loved his money more than himself.[61] This Phaeton was the morning and evening star. He acted as one of the two charioteers of his mother, the rosy-fingered dawn, Eos; the other charioteer was Lampos. This Phaeton is thus Eosphoros, the dawn-carrier, and Phosphoros, the light-bearer. He drove his mother across the sky accompanying the sun during its course. When the sun rose Eos became Hemera, "day," and she announced the arrival of the sun before he sank into the western ocean, as Hespera, "evening."[62]

Grelot wishes to identify Hll ben Šahar with the second Phaeton.

This solution to the meaning of the phrase is aided by the fact that LXX translates the Hebrew Hll bn Šḥr by the word Ἑωσφόρος, "the dawn-carrier;" while the Vulgate translates it by the word lucifer, "the light-bearer." Grelot thinks that the tale of Phaeton, son of Helios, i.e. Phaeton (1), and his ὕβρις in wishing to drive the chariot of the sun was originally connected with Phaeton (2), the charioteer of Eos. In course of time the motif of hubris had become detached from the astral myth and applied to the tale of folk-lore. He puts forward the theory that the Biblical author had before him a prototype of this Phoenician myth.[63]

Having made this point of comparison with the Greek myth, Grelot returns to the Ugaritic texts and indicates that from them we learn that there was a certain deity Athtar who wished to supplant Yam, the sea-god, and later attempted to take the place of Baal when the latter had been forced to enter the underworld realm of his rival Mot.[64] He concludes that the character of Athtar must therefore have been dominated by hubris. The next stage of his argument is to prove that Athtar is Hll bn Šḥr. Now we do know that Athtar, who was one of the sons of Dame Athirat of the sea, the wife of El, did try to take Baal's place when the latter languished in the underworld.[64] But this attempt to occupy the throne of Baal can hardly count as hubris, as he was a son of Baal and Athirat and had a right to succeed in the absence of his father. The fact that he was too small in stature to occupy the throne of Baal and that he admitted that he could not be king, "on the heights of Ṣapon," does not prove that his overweening hubris was dashed to the ground and that he "fell from heaven." Albright also accepts this theory and says that Athtar's final destiny is described in Isaiah 14.[65] Grelot concludes that Athtar is the son of Šḥr, the divinity of the dawn and that he and Hll bn Šḥr are one and

the same person and that we may find the tale of Athtar concluded in Isaiah 14.[66]

There is no evidence, however, in the Ugaritic texts to say finally that Athtar is the morning star. He is the son of Baal and the lady Athirat of the sea. His chief function is that of a god of springs and pools,[67] a fact which Grelot apparently takes no account of. In all the literature there is a great confusion about Athtar; some link him with the male form of the Akkadian androgynous morning and evening star, other link him to a South Arabian astral deity. Therefore, despite the confident conclusions of Albright and Grelot, I cannot see that Athtar, god of springs and pools, is, in any way, connected with Šhr in the Ugaritic texts, nor am I disposed to see any tangible link between the same deity and Hll bn Šḥr in Isaiah 14.

However there are some positive points which may be made in the discussion. Grelot has drawn attention to the parallel which exists between Phaeton, son of Eos, and Hll bn Šḥr; both are sons of the dawn and both are the morning star. If it could be proved in Greek mythology that this Phaeton had originally been attached to the tale of the hubris of Phaeton (2) then the parallelism would be almost complete. The story of the morning star's assault of the towers of heaven may be part of a lost Canaanite or Phoenician myth, which has survived in part in Greek mythology and here in Isaiah 14, in this tiny fragment. This is the most which may be said safely. Further it seems to me that we must take into account a purely natural phenomenon. In the very clear sky of the Middle East, before the first light of dawn appears in the sky, the brightest luminary by far is the morning star; as the light of dawn breaks in the east the brightness of the star begins to fade until it disappears altogether as full light floods the sky,

then it reappears as the evening star. This is the charioteer of the dawn, who heralds, in Greek myth, the arrival of his mother Eos. This may be in Hebrew Hll, "the shining one," son of the dawn. It is thus possible, though only possible, that this fragment in Isaiah 14 refers to the morning star, the son of the dawn who turned himself to rise against heaven, but fell right to the earth.

שחר was the dawn in the Old Testament. In Job 3.9 it is personified, but the personification carries no mythological significance:

ואל־ראה בעפעפי שחר

"And do not let it see the eyelids of the dawn."

In other places the word means no more than dawn, e.g.

Amos 4.13 עשה שחר עיפה

"Who makes the morning dawn darkness.

Job 38.12 המימיך צוית בקר ידעת השחר מקמו

"Have you commanded the morning since the beginning of your days or made the dawn to know its place?"

Verse 13 continues the tale of the aspiring divinity,

ואתה אמרת בלבבך השמים אעלה
ממעל לכוכבי־אל ארים כסאי
ואשב בהר מועד בירכתי צפון

"And you thought, I will ascend to heaven,
I will raise my throne above the mighty stars,
I will dwell on the mountain of assembly, on the peaks of Zaphon."

"I will ascend to heaven," this suggests the hubris of the deity.

כוכבי־אל, lit. "stars of El." אל may, however, be taken in a superlative sense and the translation "mighty stars" accepted.

→ [The italics represent my own translation. For they Driver has Gupn- and-Ugr, the messengers of Baal who appear later. Driver also has, "in the heights of the north," but as Baal is called b l spn, it seems preferable to translate as I have done leaving the name of the mountain unchanged.]72

The goddess Anat, the wife of Baal, goes to visit him to tell him that El has given permission for him to build a palace, she sets her face

m . bʿl . mrym . spn

" Towards Baal on the heights of Zaphon."73

El was also the chief god of the Ugaritic pantheon, and originally perhaps the aspiring deity sought to go beyond the stars of El.

הַר-מוֹעֵד and צפון may be conveniently discussed together for they are one and the same place. The assembly referred to is the assembly of the gods. "Mount Zaphon is the modern Jebal al 'aqra the snow-capped mountain about 25 to 30 miles to the north-east of Ugarit."[69]

In Ugaritic mythology Baal is the god of this mountain and is designated b'l spn and sometimes 'el spn.[70] Driver regards the Ugaritic spn/sp'n as a name of the Jebal al 'aqra, "The bald (i.e. snow-topped) mountain."[71]

tb'. wl . ytb. 'elm . 'idk

l ytn . pnm . 'm . b'l

mrym . spn ....

"The gods did depart and stayed not; then

they verily set their faces

toward Baal on the heights of Zaphon ...."

→

[The italics are my own translation.]

Baal tells his sister Anat that together they will search out a secret amidst the rocks of El Zaphon,

'atm . w'ank

'ibgyh . btk . gry . 'el . spn

"Thou and I

will search it out amid the rocks of El Zaphon."[74]

These references show the connection of Baal with Zaphon the mountain on which he dwelt. He was lord and god of this dominating peak, where the rains were concentrated and from which many north Syrian streams drew their water.

יַרְכְתֵי - צָפוֹן : RSV, for example, translates this phrase as "far north." NEB has "far recesses of the north." It seems much more satisfactory to translate the phrase as "the peaks (heights) of Zaphon (יַרְכְתֵי lit. "extremities")," as the idea of height renders the contrast with the deepest parts of the underworld, the יַרְכְתֵי־בוֹר , in verse 15, much more sharp. From the snow-capped towers of Zaphon, which reach up among the stars the aspiring godling is flung down into the murky depths of the nether world. In verse 14, he continues his harangue:

אֶעֱלֶה עַל־בָּמֳתֵי עָב אֶדַּמֶּה לְעֶלְיוֹן

"I will mount the heights of the clouds, I will be like Elyon."

עַל־בָּמֳתֵי עָב is reminiscent of Ugaritic myth. Baal was known as rkb ʿrpt, "the rider of the clouds."[75] Yahweh, in the Old Testament also rode upon the clouds, Pss. 18.10; 68.5,34; 104.3: Deut. 33.26: Is. 19.1.[76]

אֵל עֶלְיוֹן was a Canaanite/Phoenician deity who was tutelary god of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem (Gen. 14.18). The name appears in the Old Testament by itself, i.e. עֶלְיוֹן , Ps. 9.3 : Is. 14.4, and also linked to Yahweh, Pss. 7.18; 47.3, and with Elohim Pss. 57.3; 78.56. These latter references indicate that Elyon was completely identified with the God of Israel.

The king of Babylon wished to be more than human, like הֵילֵל בֶּן שָׁחַר he wished to ascend above the heights of the mountain of the gods, to ride on top of the clouds and to shine beyond the mighty stars; in verse 15, however, a different fate awaits him,

אַךְ אֶל שְׁאוֹל תּוּרַד אֶל־יַרְכְתֵי בוֹר

"But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit."

Duhm says, "who has climbed to the greatest heights, falls into the deepest pit."[77] This statement of Duhm supports my translation of יַרְכְּתֵי־צָפוֹן as "peaks of Zaphon." The mountain of the gods has become for the tyrant the pit of the dead. This is the end of "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself."

Verses 12 to 15 reflect an old lost myth of an astral deity who sought to storm the towers of heaven, but fell to the depths of the underworld. It has been used by the writer of Isaiah 14 to act as a vehicle for derisory comment on the overweening ambition and the meteoric fall of the king of Babylon.

With verse 16 the tone of the poem alters. There is no hint of Ugaritic mythology in the succeeding verses. These verses give a quasi-historical résumé of the career of the tyrant king of Babylon and point a sharp contrast to the mythological language of the preceding section. 16 describes the mocking interest with which the denizens of Sheol regard their newly-arrived companion:

רְאֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ יְשָׁגִיחוּ אֵלֶיךָ יִתְבּוֹנָנוּ
הֲזֶה הָאִישׁ מַרְגִּיז הָאָרֶץ מַרְעִישׁ מַמְלָכוֹת

"Those who see you stare at you, they ponder long over you.
Is this the man who shook the earth, who made kingdoms quake?"

The inhabitants of Sheol are surprised that this insubstantial shade was once a great king whose rule extended over the known world. Kissane suggests that רְאֶיךָ refers to "those who saw thee in the days of thy glory."[78] I am not at all sure what he means by this. The meaning of the word is perfectly clear, it signifies, "those who see you now in Sheol." Verse 17 continues,

שָׂם תֵּבֵל כַּמִּדְבָּר וְעָרָיו הָרָס
אַסִּירָיו לֹא פָתַח בֵּיתָה

"Who made the inhabited world like a desert, who demolished its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home."

In the first half of the verse I accept one of the emendations proposed by the new edition of BH (ed. D. Winton Thomas). עָרָיו seems rather out of place, as it is unlikely that the tyrant would have laid waste his own cities. There are two suggestions:-

1. עָרֶיהָ , "its cities," has a feminine suffix referring back to תֵּבֵל . This is supported only by the Aethiopic Version.

2. וְעָרִים , "cities" following LXX καὶ τὰς πόλεις , "and the cities."

I prefer 1. referring back to תֵּבֵל , the tyrant laid the world and its cities waste. 2. was accepted by most older commentators e.g. Procksch,[79] and there is no reason to object to those who would accept this emendation.

Commentators have found difficulty with the second half of the verse and they have emended as follows:-

לֹא־פָתַח בֵּית־כְּלָאָיו

"He opened not the prison to his prisoners."[80]

Others such as Marti and Skinner[82] wish to remove בֵּיתָה and bring אִישׁ בֵּיתוֹ from its present place at the end of verse 18 giving the translation, "that let not his prisoners loose, each man to his home." There is, however, no real necessity to alter MT which can be translated quite literally, "his prisoners he let not loose homewards," i.e. "who did not let his prisoners go home."

The suggestion of Delitzsch is also to be accepted that תֵּבֵל is the οἰκουμένη , the inhabited world.[83] The verse continues the enumeration of the triumphs of the king of Babylon who devastated the world and cast its cities into heaps and piles of ruin.

Verses 18, 19 and 20 speak of the burial, or lack of burial of the king of Babylon. I have noted above[84] how important proper burial was considered to be in the Ancient Near East. In these verses it would seem that we have an echo of the awful fate which was supposed to visit the shade of an unburied corpse. Honourable burial was the last dignity paid to royalty. To be carefully interred and to have the proper tomb-offerings and libations was the last wish of every dying man, before his shade descended to the underworld.

18. כל-מלכי גוים כלם שכבו בכבוד איש בביתו

"All the kings of the nations lie in honour, each man in his tomb."

BH following 1QIs[a] (Dead Sea Scrolls), LXX and Syriac delete כֻּלָּם as being redundant after the first כל, this is accepted in the above translation.

All the kings rest in honour each man in his tomb. This illustrates the belief that while the body remained in the tomb, the shade went to Sheol. Unlike the kings already in Sheol the Babylonian king did not rest in his grave as verse 19 goes on to say:

ואתה השלכת מקברך כנצר נתעב לבוש הרגים
מטעני חרב יורדי־אל־אבני־בור כפגר מובס

"But you are cast away from your grave, like an abortion which causes loathing, clothed with the slain, those wounded by the sword, like a trampled corpse."

The text of this verse is rather complex. יורדי אל-אבני-בור should be transferred after verse 20a (see below). כְּנֵצֶר נִתְעָב is very difficult to translate. LXX has ὡς νεκρὸς ἐβδελυγμένος "like a loathed corpse," which suggests נֵפֶל "an untimely birth abortion." נֵפֶל is proposed by Marti and Procksch.[85] Job 3.16 says that an abortion was not buried.

הָשְׁלַכְתָּ מִקִּבְרֶךָ , I am inclined to accept the translations of Duhm and Childs. Duhm translates מקברך as "outwith thy grave."[86] Childs translates the phrase, "You are cast out, away from your sepulchre."[87] Other kings had a seemly burial, but the king of Babylon did not even reach the tomb which had been prepared for him.

לְבוּשׁ הֲרוּגִים , for this phrase LXX has μετὰ πολλῶν τεθνηκότων "with many dead," which is just an attempt to make sense of a difficult MT. If we take MT as it stands and translate the phrase as, "clothed with the slain," in the sense of the corpse of the king of Babylon flung with other mutilated bodies on a deserted battlefield, then tolerable sense is obtained. No emendations which have been suggested improve the situation any or make the meaning clearer. The general import of the verse is to depict the king of Babylon as a mutilated corpse, trampled upon and lying in the corner of some forgotten battlefield, far from the tomb which had been prepared for him.

Delitzsch suggests that a hasty burial is indicated here, but this does not give nearly enough contrast to the preceding verse and there is no real indication of any such burial from the rest of the text, there can be no grave for such a loathsome figure.[87]

20. לא־תחד אתם בקבורה כי ארצך שחת עמך הרגת
לא־יקרא לעולם זרע מרעים

"You are not joined with them in the grave, with those who go down to the stones of the grave, for you have laid waste your land, slain your people: there will be no future for the seed of evil-workers."

יורדי אל־ אבני־בור inserted from verse 19 after 20a provides adequate parallelism to 20a. The king of Babylon does not join with the other kings in burial. He is not laid upon the stones of the grave-chamber. בור means "grave," it cannot be the underworld, as the shade of the king goes to the underworld even though his body remains unburied. It would be idle to deny that this verse is very difficult to translate satisfactorily, but the general sense seems to be that the Babylonian king is not buried like other kings.

In the second half of the verse we learn that even the land and people of Babylon were not free from the depredations of the tyrant. Verse 21 indicates that the children of the king must also suffer for his misdeeds.

"The depths of Sheol are in a turmoil on your account,
to meet you as you arrive.

It rouses the shades, all who were leaders on the earth
to meet you:

It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones.
They all speak with one voice, they say to you,
'You, too, are reduced to impotence like us, you are in a similar condition to us!'

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn.
How you are cut down to the ground (perhaps, "underworld"),
you who brought the nations low.
For you thought, I will ascend to heaven,
I will raise my throne above the mighty stars;
I will dwell on the mountain of Assembly, on the peaks of Zaphon.

I will mount the heights of the clouds, I will be like Elyon.
But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the pit.
Those who see you stare at you, they ponder long over you.
Is this the man who shook the earth, who made the kingdoms quake?
Who made the inhabited world like a desert, who demolished its cities; who did not let his prisoners go home.
All the kings of the nations lie in honour, each man in his tomb.
But you are cast away from your grave, like an abortion which causes loathing, clothed with the slain, those wounded by the sword, like a trampled corpse.

You are not joined with them in the grave, (with) those who go down to the stones of the grave-chamber, for you have laid waste your land, slain your people; there will be no future for the seed of evil-workers."

The above passage was written as a taunt-song to mock the fall of the king of Babylon and his subsequent arrival in the underworld. The aim of the writer was not to give interested posterity a detailed description of current Israelite belief in the underworld. Various motifs are employed and the picture is not always consistent. The king is like the rest of the shades in that he is weak and enfeebled, yet he seems to be less honourable. The king descends to Sheol, yet his body does not lie in honourable burial. As I said previously it would be quite wrong to expect consistency of image and idea in such a passage, which is poetry. Mythological elements are drawn from a wide background and combined with literary skill to form the whole. Sheol is below the earth and into it all men must go, even kings, this is the most that may be learned from this passage. It is worth noting in passing that Yahweh is only mentioned once, in verse 5.

There are other verses in Isaiah worthy of mention, some of which will be dealt with in later chapters. 7.11 indicates that Sheol is deep in the earth. Allusions to the depth of the underworld abound in the Old Testament; depth is one of the most common characteristics of the nether world. 26.19 points to the fact that the dead dwell in a land of dust; the shades are called the שׁכְנֵי־עָפָר "dwellers in the dust."

38.9-20 to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter contains the supposed lament of king Hezekiah which he is said to have composed on the occasion of his recovery from a very serious illness. This psalm is not found in the parallel passage in 2 Kings 20, and was probably inserted into Isaiah because of the peculiar appositeness of its contents to the plight of Hezekiah.

Verse 10 mentions the שַׁעֲרֵי־שְׁאוֹל, "the gates of Sheol." A similar motif was noted in Job 38.17 where the "gates of death" and the "gates of darkness" stood in parallel (שַׁעֲרֵי־צַלְמָוֶת). Gates as a feature of the underworld were prominent in Mesopotamian and Egyptian mythology as we have seen.

The author of the psalm is committed by Yahweh to Sheol in much the same manner as a prisoner is committed to a guard-house. Marti says that פָּקַדְתִּי in this verse, "I am committed," is to be taken in the same sense as in Jeremiah 37.21, when the officers of king Zedekiah commit the prophet into the court of the guard,[88]

Verse 11 emphasises the fact, common to all psalms which deal with the underworld, that the person who is consigned to Sheol is totally cut off from the land of the living. The inhabitants of the nether world are also completely cut off from Yahweh, they have no further dealings with him or he with them. Verse 18 expands this theme by saying that the dead no longer praise God, they are deprived of the cherished

privilege which the living have, that of praising Yahweh in the midst of the worshipping community of Israel.

The land of the dead is deep, it is a land of dust and it is approached by gates. These are such fragments of information about the underworld as may be gleaned from Isaiah. They are fragments, they are no longer part of a living myth.

C. EZEKIEL

In Ezekiel 25-29 there are a series of prophecies against other nations, Tyre, Sidon, Edom and Egypt. In all of these prophecies there are many references to various mythological motifs and not least to the mythology of death.

Chapter 26 deals with the siege and the ultimate fall of the city of Tyre to the king Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. Tyre had been the moving force behind a coalition of the smaller Syrian states, formed to present a barrier against the increasing power of Babylon in the west.[89] In this chapter Ezekiel describes the siege and fall of Tyre, to the siege engines of Babylon. Tyre was a wealthy trading city which had many commercial connections, not least with Egypt. In the year 587 B.C. Jerusalem, Tyre and Egypt stood against the advancing power of Babylon. Ezekiel regarded the power of Nebuchadrezzar as the instrument of Yahweh's judgement and thus he inveighed bitterly against those who resisted it and pronounced doom on them. The siege of the island fortress of Tyre was begun by Nebuchadrezzar in 587/586 B.C. and ended with the capitulation of the city thirteen years later in 573/572 B.C.[90]

Ezekiel describes the mechanics of the siege and the capitulation of the city in verses 1-14. In verses 15-18 he depicts the princes of the sea in the deepest mourning for the vanquished city. Verses 19-21 relate the descent of Tyre into the underworld with those who go down to the Pit.

19.

כי כה אמר אדני יהוה בתתי אתך עיר נחרבת כערים
אשר לא־נושבו בהעלות עליך את־תהום וכסוך המים
הרבים

"Thus speaks Yahweh, 'When I make you a city laid waste, like the cities which are derelict, when I bring the deep over you and many waters cover you.'"

אדני is neither in LXX nor Vulg. and is best deleted. For בְּהַעֲלוֹת LXX has ἐν τῷ ἀναγαγεῖν με, "when I bring up," and Vulgate et adduxero, "and I shall have brought up." It would therefore seem better to read בהעלותי, "when I bring up," which would then also be parallel to בְּתִתִּי, "when I make."

I propose to deal with the "deep" and its connections with the realm of death in another chapter, and this verse will be discussed in that context. It suffices here to indicate that the way to the nether world was often conceived as lying through the waters of the world ocean.[91]

20.

והורדתיך את־יורדי בור אל־עם עולם והושבתיך
בארץ תחתיות כחרבות מעולם את־יורדי בור
למען לא תשבי ונתתי צבי בארץ חיים

"And I will make you go down, with those who descend to the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the nether world like (cities?) long since laid waste, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you will not return or have a place in the land of the living."

There is no need to alter אֶת to אֶל in the phrase את־יורדי בור as BH does following LXX πρὸς τοὺς καταβαίνοντας εἰς βόθρον "to those that go down to the Pit." van Dijk suggests that אֶת be left also but he translates it as "to," adducing the following reasons:

1. The יורדי בור are the dead, not the dying.

2. Ezekiel always writes את for עם but את means "to" in Phoenician and ᶜm means "to" in Ugaritic and can mean "to" in Ezekiel.[92]

These facts are indisputable, but it seems that his reasoning is at fault. "Those who go down to the Pit" are already dead and to go "with" them one must also be dead, but whether את or עם is used makes not the slightest difference. Presumably van Dijk means that יורדי בור signifies those already in the Pit, as opposed to those going down, but both categories are dead. The second reason, that את in Phoenician and ᶜm in Ugaritic both mean "to", does not alter the fact that את in Hebrew usually means "with," and there is no need to make it mean anything else here. I simply do not understand his reasoning, he seems to be making difficulties where none exist. He goes to great lengths to prove that יורדי בור means the dead, this is self-evident and no commentator has ever suggested otherwise. את־יורדי בור occurs frequently in Ezekiel, e.g. 31.16; 32.18,24,29,30.

The phrase חרבות מעולם "like ruins from eternity," is rather difficult to interpret. Zimmerli proposes to leave it as it stands translating "like the long since devastated," following the LXX ὡς ἔρημον αἰῶνιον, "like an everlasting desert."[93] Eichrodt reads חרבות מעולם, "very ancient waste," (uralter Wüstung), as a phrase standing by itself.[94] This does not help much to fit the phrase into its given context. Fohrer, Cooke and Bertholet all read בחרבות עולם, "in ancient ruins."[95] On the whole it seems that the ~~emendation~~ explanation of Zimmerli is most satisfactory and involves no emendation of MT. If we accept that

the "long since laid waste," refers to other cities which have preceded Tyre to the underworld, then the suggestion is easier to understand. I have adopted this in my translation.

תִּנָּשֵׁבִי , "you shall dwell ," following BH is altered to תָּשׁוּבִי (לֹא) , "you will not return."

The phrase וְנָתַתִּי צְבִי in MT, "I will give beauty," is hardly suitable and most commentators suggest וְתִתְּנִי־צְבִי , "you will have a place/position."[96]

Tyre is cast down along with those who go down to the Pit, to lie with those inhabitants of the kingdom of the dead who have gone down to the nether world since the beginning of time, the עַם עוֹלָם Tyre, a city of palaces and temples must go down to the underworld to join those who have preceded her since the mists of long past history. Verse 21 emphasises the fact that Tyre will never be found again after her terrifying end;

> "I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more; though you be sought for you will never be found again." (RSV)

The next chapter, 27, depicts the city of Tyre as a beautiful galleon carrying priceless treasure to the nations with whom she traded. This great ship is wrecked on the high seas and she is mourned by all seafaring nations. Her fate horrifies all kings and merchants.[97]

Chapter 28.1-10 tells the tale of the hubris of the king of Tyre ~~who said~~, (v. 2)

וַתֹּאמֶר אֵל אֲנִי מוֹשַׁב אֱלֹהִים יָשַׁבְתִּי בְלֵב יַמִּים

> "And you said, 'I am a god, I dwell in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas.' "

Impressed by his own wisdom and wealth he accorded himself divine status.

In Isaiah the subject of hubris was the king of Babylon, here the נגיד צר , "the prince of Tyre," who had the desire to take his place among the gods. This theme of hubris is further expanded in verses 11-19 where the monarch is likened to the first and finest man in the garden of god, whose wisdom and beauty corrupted him, until he refused to remain a mere man any longer. The motif in 11-19 differs from 1-10 and Isaiah 14 in that, although it has the theme of hubris, it represents a "paradise myth," which is not found in any other prophetic book, so far as I am aware. In 28.8 the prince of Tyre suffers the same fate as the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14,

למשחת יורדוך ומתה מתות חלל בלב ימים

"They will cause you to go down to the Pit, and you will die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas."

The prince of Tyre must go to the underworld, down into the deep to the realm of death, devastation and debility.

Chapter 31 likens the Pharaoh of Egypt to a gigantic, fabulous and beautiful cedar. It drew its nourishment from the deep, watering at the same time, the plants around it. It was more beautiful than the cedars and all the other trees בגן - אלהים , "in the garden of god," and, not unnaturally, it excited their jealousy, verses 8 and 9. The use of the cedar to represent the king of trees in fable goes back to early Mesopotamian times and was a common feature in the Ancient Near East. The "cedar mountain," most probably located in Lebanon, appears in the Sumerian tale of "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living," and in the Akkadian "Epic of Gilgamesh."[98] The prominence of the cedar stems, no doubt, from its great value as timber for housing and shipping, not only in Mesopotamia, but also in the virtually treeless Egypt, which throughout its long history sent to Byblos for

cedar wood, usually for some useful social purpose such as the "barque of Amun."

This passage in Ezekiel 31 is in the nature of a contest fable. Trees as the chief protagonists often appear in such fables. Lambert cites a few such as, "The Tamarisk and the Palm," "The Fable of the Willow," and "Nisaba and Wheat," (here the protagonists are a goddess and grain).[99] There is usually some sort of mythological introduction to the tale, then the principal protagonists laud their own special virtues, after which the session is usually wound up in a judgement scene before a god, who settles the question.

In the Old Testament the cedar is a symbol of strength, Pss. 29.5; 37.35: Is. 2.13, 9,10: Zech. 11.2, of splendour and beauty, Cant. 1.17: Jer. 22.14, and of glory, Ps. 80.10: Jer. 22.7: Zech. 11.1. The Hebrew word for "cedar", אֶרֶז , is often used in the phrase אֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן , "cedar in Lebanon," e.g. Ez. 31.3. The "cedars of Lebanon" appear in the fable of the trees choosing a king for themselves in Judges 9.7-15.

The cedar in the passage from Ezekiel towers high into the clouds of heaven and is proud of its great height. Like the Tower of Babel in Gen. 11, the cedar is cast down because of this very fact. Pharaoh is the cedar and like it he must be flung down. The language of verse 12 speaks of the terrible nations cutting down the tree;

וְכָרְתוּהוּ זָרִים עָרִיצֵי גּוֹיִם

"And foreigners, the terrible ones of the nations
shall cut it down."

Its fall would encompass mountains and valleys, whole nations of men would creep from under the shadow of its fallen bulk and leave it for ever. Verse 14a points to the fate of the cedar as an example

to other trees by the waters that they may not be motivated by a like hubris to grow so far up into the clouds of heaven. 14b promises a similar fate if they do this;

כי כלם נתנו למות אל-ארץ תחתית
בתוך בני אדם את-יורדי בור

"For they (the trees) are all given (over) to death, to the land below, among mortal men, to those who go down to the Pit."

The trees are handed into the power of death, they enter the sphere of the underworld along with all mortal men who have gone down to the Pit.

15-18 describe the descent of the tree into the nether world.

15. כה אמר אדני יהוה ביום רדתו שאולה הארבלתי כסותי
עליו את תהום ואמנע נהרותיה ויכלאו מים רבים
ואקדר עליו לבנון וכל-עצי-השדה עליו עלפה

"Thus speaks Yahweh, 'On the day of its going down to Sheol I will make the deep dry up because of it and I will withhold its streams and many waters shall be dammed. I will make Lebanon mourn for it and all the trees of the meadow will be faint with grief for it."

אבל can mean "to dry up,"[100]

כסותי following LXX is deleted, as redundant.

עֻלְפָּה , "mourning, languor," is not attested in LXX which has a verb, ἐξελύθησαν , "they languished, fainted," this suggests rather a Hebrew יַעֲלְפוּ , "they will be faint with grief." BH, Fohrer, Zimmerli, Bertholet all follow LXX here.[101] As it involves the alteration of only one letter ה to ו it seems reasonable to accept this.

The presumptuous tree is destroyed by being thrust down into Sheol. תְּהוֹם who virtually nourished the cedar will mourn for it as much as the Babylonian Tiāmat was said to mourn for her murdered husband Apsū. Like the תְּהוֹם the intestines ~~innards~~ of Tiāmat are disturbed, she is reminded of her grief by her brothers;

> "Thy insides are diluted and se we can have no rest.
> Let Apsū, thy consort, be in thy mind
> and Mummu (his son) who has been vanquished! Thou art left alone!"[102]

The fall of the cedar would spread gloom in Lebanon and all the trees of the meadow would languish. This widespread mourning for the fate of the tree by the tehōm, its sustainer, and all the other trees, indicates that it is a question of a cosmic tree, a world tree, which has its roots in the deeps and its topmost twigs in the heavens.[103]

Verse 16 speaks of the horror of the nations at the end of the tree and of the mourning with which the tree is greeted on its arrival in the underworld;

מקול מפלתו הרעשתי גוים בהורדי אתו שאולה
את־יורדי בור וינחמו בארץ תחתית כל־עצי־עדן מבחר
וטוב־לבנון כל־שתי מים

"At the sound of its fall I will make the nations tremble, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the Pit; all the beautiful trees and the choice of Lebanon and all that drink water shall commiserate (with it) in the underworld."

תחתית is lacking in LXX^{B} and Eichrodt and Fohrer[104] think that the two words ארץ תחתית should be deleted. This is quite unnecessary as the phrase appears elsewhere, e.g. 31.14b and in the form ארץ תחתיות in 32.18,24. The phrase is a perfectly common designation for the underworld and should be retained. In this verse the mourning is now taking place in the nether world.

וינחמו , for this LXX has καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτον , "and comforted him." This would imply that the cedar, now in the underworld, was the object of the commiseration of those already there.

עדן, for this LXX has τῆς τρυφῆς , "of delight," qualifying πάντα τὰ ξύλα , "all the trees."

כל-עצי-עדן may, thus, be taken to mean simply "beautiful trees."

ובחור is not in LXX and as Zimmerli suggests that it is probably a gloss, it is best left out,[105]

The nations will shake when the tree, the symbol of the might and pride of Pharaoh, descends to Sheol. The good and beautiful trees will commiserate with it in the underworld.

Verse 17 is corrupt both in MT and LXX. It makes no real contribution to the present enquiry and is deleted both by Fohrer and Eichrodt, who regard it as a supplementary gloss.[106]

Verse 18 sums up the fate of the proud cedar;

אל-מי דמית ככה בכבוד ובגדל בעצי-עדן והורדת
(את-עצי-עדן) אל ארץ תחתית בתוך ערלים תשכב את-
חלל-חרב הוא פרעה וכל-המונה נאם יהוה אדני

"Who can thus, be compared to you in glory and greatness among the beautiful trees; you will be brought down to the land below in the midst of the uncircumcised, you will lie with those slain by the sword; even pharaoh and all his host, says Yahweh."

As it stands in MT this verse is somewhat puzzling for it seems to imply that the beautiful trees, the עצי-עדן, share the same end as the cedar. But verse 16 informs us that they are in the underworld already. Following Fohrer, therefore, it seems best to delete the second את-עצי-עדן.[107]

For הֲמוֹנָהּ the Qere, הֲמוֹנוֹ is to be read.

18a repeats, more or less, the question of 2b אֶל-מִי דָּמִיתָ בְּגָדְלֶךָ, "to whom are you like in greatness?" breaking in with a direct address. 18b turns the subject of the chapter once more to Pharaoh and his host, who have not been mentioned since verse 2a. This closing remark about the pharaoh is, as Zimmerli suggests, by no means superfluous, for no concrete allusion to the Egyptian power was made in the poem about the cedar.[108]

Like Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 31.2-18 is full of mythological motifs; the world-tree is mentioned, which grows in the garden of god. Further, it in itself represents the cosmos, reaching from the depths of the world ocean to the heights of heaven. For its hubris it is

cast into the underworld, along with the slain and the uncircumcised, the first mention of specific categories of men dwelling in the nether world. It would be wrong to treat this passage as anything other than poetry. Mythological fragments are woven together to form a pattern made up of many different strands of myth, paradisal, cosmic and myths of the underworld.

32.1-15 contains a lament for pharaoh and an announcement of impending judgement on him. He is represented as a dragon in the seas, hauled out by the net of Yahweh and flung to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Verses 17-32 complete the sayings against Egypt by describing the final descent of pharaoh and all his host into the underworld. These verses make reference to the underworld and its inhabitants and merit examination. They might well be entitled, "A Dirge to be sung on the downfall of pharaoh." The text of the extract is difficult and corrupt, therefore many details of language must inevitably delay the survey. This is an eerie vision of the descent of Egypt to Sheol to join other defeated nations. "In the century and a half before the time of Ezekiel all the world-shaking powers in the Middle East had been overthrown, save Tyre and Egypt alone."[109] Tyre we have dealt with, Egypt's final overthrow remains.

This extract was originally a poem, but in many places owing to the very bad text, the form of the original poem cannot be recovered with any certainty.[110] Verse 17 is a prose introduction to the poem;

ויהי בשתי עשרה שנה בחמשה עשר לחדש היה
דבר־יהוה אלי לאמר

"In the twelfth year, the first month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of Yahweh came to me saying;"

There is obviously something lacking between שנה and בחמשה because the exact month of the year is not specified, so it is most probable that the number of the month is missing. On the strength of the LXX τῷ πρώτῳ μηνός Zimmerli, Fohrer and Bertholet suggest that בראשון , "in the first month," should be inserted.[111] If this is accepted then 32.1 must be brought into the chronological sequence, for in MT there stands בשתים עשרה שנה "in the twelfth year" followed by, בשנים עשר חדש , "in the twelfth month." BH notes that several Hebrew mss. support the reading בשתי עשרה שנה "in the eleventh year;" this is supported by LXX^{A} (Codex Alexandrinus) and the Syriac. Thus it would seem preferable to read in 32.1 בעשתי עשרה שנה , "in the eleventh year." This follows on satisfactorily from 31.1 בשלשים ושתים שנה בראשון בשלשה לחדש , "in the eleventh year in the third month on the first day of the month. All of this explains the proferred emendation in 32.17, which, if accepted without any alteration of 32.1, would seem anachronistic in the timetable of the prophecies.

The dating of the poem, or what was the poem, is, according to Zimmerli in the year between 13.4.586 and 1.4.585 B.C.[112] It was the time after the fall of Jerusalem and the forces of Babylon were available to turn their attention to the advancing army of Egypt.

18 בן־אדם נהה על־המון מצרים והורדהו אותה
ובנות גוים אדרים אל־ארץ תחתיות את־יורדי בור

"Son of man, raise a lament over the pomp of Egypt, for the nations cast her down to the land below, with those who go down to the Pit.

The text of this verse is complicated. LXX has,

Υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου, θρήνησον ἐπὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν Αἰγύπτου, καὶ καταβιβάσουσιν αὐτῆς τὰς θυγατέρας τὰ ἔθνη νεκρὰς εἰς τὸ βάθος τῆς γῆς, πρὸς τοὺς καταβαίνοντας εἰς βόθρον.

"Son of man, lament over the strength of Egypt and the nations shall bring down her daughters dead to the depth of the earth, to those who go down to the Pit."

LXX supports MT as far as מצרים .

For הָנָּהּ the Targum has הִנָּבֵא , "prophesy!" this emphasises the prophetic character of the lament and is perfectly correct exegesis. There is no need to alter הֲמוֹן to גְּאוֹן "pride," as BH suggests; הֲמוֹן is a collective noun representing the pomp of pharaoh, i.e. his wealth and his entourage all going down to the underworld.

וְהוֹרְדֶהָ אוֹתָהּ וּבְנוֹת גּוֹיִם , "and bring him down, her and the daughters of the majestic nations," is incomprehensible as it stands. LXX καὶ καταβιβάσουσιν suggests a plural verb. Fohrer indicates וְהוֹרְדוּ , "and they bring/cut down," making the subject of this verb גּוֹיִם , "the nations."[113]

בנות , he says, is a gloss inserted under the influence of verse 16, "the daughters of the nations (בְּנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם) shall chant it." So I read וְהוֹרְדוּ אוֹתָהּ גּוֹיִם , "for the nations cast her down." He wishes also to delete אַדִּיר , "more glorious," as an explanatory gloss, presumably of הֲמוֹן. כִּיאֵרִים , but he does not say. Fohrer's emendations to this verse are not entirely satisfactory, but the text is so corrupt that

of the many emendations that are offered, none completely solves the problem, but, for want of better, I accept those of Fohrer, which do not involve overmuch alteration of MT. The meaning of the verse is nonetheless clear, the prophet is called to raise a lament over the pomp of Egypt, which is now cast down to the underworld by the nations.

There is no need to transpose verse 19 to after verse 21a, for it makes sense where it stands as a mocking question addressed to pharaoh. We must note that the figures of pharaoh and of Egypt tend to merge with one another in this chapter, and thus it is not often possible to tell easily whether pharaoh or Egypt is being addressed.

19. מִמִּי נָעַמְתְּ רְדִי וְהִשָּׁכְבִי אֶת־עֲרֵלִים

"Whom do you surpass in beauty?" Go down and find your bed with the uncircumcised!"

Zimmerli takes the Hophal הָשָּׁכְבִי as a reflexive, "make your own bed," and I have taken this into my translation.[114]

This question is addressed by the prophet to Egypt and not spoken to pharaoh, by the inhabitants of the underworld. Though Egypt had great beauty among the nations, she is scornfully hurled down to lie with the uncircumcised in the Pit.

Of verse 20 Bertholet says, "Every attempt at a reconstruction of the dubious text has only hypothetical worth."[115] Zimmerli, Fohrer and Cooke agree with this statement.[116] I leave out this verse and verse 21, since both are so corrupt with regard to text, that, even when emended, they do not add much to an understanding of the form and content of the poem.[117] Presumably the original text intended to show that Egypt had now fallen down among the inhabitants of the Pit, "those slain by the sword," and the "uncircumcised."

Verses 22 to 30 list some of the nations who have preceded Egypt to Sheol.

22 שם אשור וכל-קהלה [סביבותיו קברתיו כלם
חללים הנפלים בחרב]

LXX lacks סביבותיו קברתיו . Fohrer proposes to delete from סביבותיו to the end of the verse as it is a doublet of 23a and if this is done the two verses read in a logical sequence.[118]

23. אשר נתנו קברתיה ביכתי בור [ויהי קהלה
סביבות קברתה] כלם חללים נפלי חרב אשר-
נתנו חתת בארץ חיים

22/23 "There is Assyria and all her assembly, whose graves are set in the deepest part of the Pit, and her assembly is round about her grave; all of them slain by the sword, who spread their terror in the land of the living."

MT of verse 23 is supported by LXX, and though there is evidence of redundancy in the verse no emendation is really worthwhile. The verse pictures Assyria and all her assembly in the deepest part of the Pit.

חתית , "terror" should be emended to חתיתם "their terror," to bring the word into line with verses 24,25 and 26. This reading is supported by LXX τὸν φόβον αὐτῶν , "their fear."

The fall of Assyria in 612 B.C. sent a shock through the Near East which the contemporaries of Ezekiel had good cause to remember.

Assyria, like Babylon in Is. 14, is located in the

ירכתי בור, the very deepest part of the underworld. The conquerors of Nineveh lie in the midst of their victims. The next verses deal with other great nations and by using similar vocabulary and syntax sound like the strokes of a great bell tolling the doom of one mighty empire after another. The original poem must have been one of great dramatic effect. Elam come next in line for attack;

24 שם עילם וכל-המונה סביבות קברתה כלם
חללים (ה)נפלי חרב אשר-ירדו ערלי
אל-ארץ התחתות אשר נתנו חתתם בארץ חיים
וישאו כלמתם את-יורדי בור

"There is Elam and all her populace round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword; who went down uncircumcised to the land below; who spread their terror in the land of the living and they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit."

Following BH and Zimmerli it is preferable to read נפלי instead of (ה)נפלי, to bring this verse into agreement with 22.[119]

Elam, after Assyria, was an extremely formidable power connected in Jewish minds with warfare. Elam inhabited the great plain to the east and south of the Lower Tigris. During the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., as Assyria was growing more powerful, Elam provided strong opposition to her. The history and culture of Elam remain

something of a mystery. In 645 B.C. after a great battle, Assyria, under Assur-bani-pal took immeasurable booty from Elam and Susa its capital after he had destroyed both in war. Ezekiel is thus speaking of contemporary political events when he places Elam in the underworld. 120 Later Elam was to become a province of the Persian empire, ruled from Shushan, ancient Susa.

The whole of verse 25 is omitted as it is almost certainly a doublet of either verse 24 or verse 26. Verse 26 brings us to other nations;

26. שם משך תבל וכל- המונה סביבותיו קבריתיה
כלם ערלים מחללי חרב כי- נתנו חתיתם בארץ
חיים

"There is Mesech-Tubal and all her assembly around her grave, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, because they spread terror in the land of the living."

For מֶשֶׁךְ תֻּבַל , LXX has Μοσὸχ καὶ Θοβὲλ taking the two words as applying to separate entities. The words are also separated by the copula in 38.2,3; 39.1 sic משך ותבל . They are joined in Ps. 120.5 משך תבל . The suffix in the word קבריתיה is singular feminine and thus would seem to suggest that MT should be retained. Mesech-Tubal were a people in Asia Minor, often identified with the rather uncanny Cimmerians or Scythians. They gave great trouble to the Assyrians in the reign of ~~Esherdon~~ Esarhaddon I during the last phase of Assyrian history. The Cimmerians were assimilated by the Medes and made their mark on the history of the Persian kingdom. Ezekiel sees Mesech-Tubal, who are historically rather obscure, joined with these dangerous northern groups, i.e. Cimmerians and Scythians.

They are all buried in the depths of the nether world along with the great powers. The viewpoint of Ezekiel is similar to that of the dwellers on the Babylonian plain in the time of Nebuchadrezzar, who looked out on the events happening to the north.[121] Certainly Mesech-Tubal were a nation to the north-east of Assyria; in the cuneiform records they are called Mus-ki.[122]

The verse appears to be prematurely broken off. קְהָלֶיהָ should be emended to קְהָלֶיהָ in conformity with verses 20 and 24. The preformative ק of קְהָלֶיהָ (ק) is very possibly a dittography from the ת of עַרְלֵי תּ . Also following other verses in this chapter קְבִירוֹתֶיהָ should be read instead of קְבִירוֹתֶיהָ .

27. (וְלֹא) יִשְׁכְּבוּ אֶת־גִּבֹּרִים נֹפְלִים מֵעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר יָרְדוּ־שְׁאוֹל בִּכְלֵי־מִלְחַמְתָּם וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־חַרְבוֹתָם תַּחַת רָאשֵׁיהֶם וַתְּהִי עֲוֹנֹתָם עַל־עַצְמוֹתָם כִּי חִתִּית גִּבֹּרִים בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים

"They lie with the mighty men, fallen of old, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war; they laid their swords under their heads and their shields upon their bones, for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living."

This verse has caused commentators a great deal of difficulty. Neither LXX, nor Syriac have לֹא , nor does L^c. If we leave out לֹא with these versions then there is no distinction made with respect to the condition of the dead in the underworld: they all lie together in the same place, honoured and dishonoured,

circumcised and uncircumcised, those who died in battle and those who died in their beds. The commentators who wish to delete אֵת are May, Cooke, Bertholet and Fohrer.[123] Zimmerli, per contra, suggests that there was, in fact, a distinction between the heroes of olden time and the then present-day tyrants in the underworld. In support of this he cites the "Epic of Gilgamesh," where position in the nether world depends on the mode of burial in the upper world. People like Nimrod, in the Old Testament were given decent burial (Gen.10.8-12). He also notes that Hesiod in his "Works and Days," pointed out that the heroes of ancient time came to rest in honour.[124]

Frankly I do not think that any hard and fast rules about life in the underworld can be drawn from such a passage. Perhaps the pharaoh of Egypt was doomed to a more miserable lot in the underworld than the heroes of old. Yet, on the other hand, the Old Testament ideas about the nether world are essentially simple despite being sometimes overlaid with mythological references. It seems best, therefore, to omit אֵת as the mark of a later editor, from an age where more reflection about the underworld was permitted.

Following BH it is best to read צִנֵּיהֶם, "their shields" for עֲוֹנֹתָם, "their transgressions," though it must, in all fairness, be pointed out that LXX has αἱ ἀνομίαι, "the iniquities," thus supporting MT. But logically swords and shields go together and the burial of soldiers with sword under head and shield over the body is by no means an uncommon practice, found also among our Celtic, Viking and Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

מֵעֲרֵלִים, "uncircumcised," is a term of abuse and therefore not likely to apply to the "mighty men." LXX has ἀπ᾽ αἰῶνος, "from of old," and the Old Latin D a saeculo, "from olden time."

Thus it seems that מִקֶּדֶם "from of old," should be read.

Like the great heroes of past empires those kingdoms of Ezekiel's present all lie together in the underworld, none better, none worse.

Verse 28 is an address by the prophet to Egypt:

ואתה בתוך ערלים (תשבר) ותשכב את-חללי-חרב

"But you are in the midst of the uncircumcised, you lie with those slain by the sword."

תִּשָּׁבֵר is almost certainly a dittography of תִּשְׁכַּב and later joined to that word by ! . It is best to delete it.

This verse may possibly be secondary, but it stands as a very effective counterpart to the question in verse 19. With verse 28 we come to the end of the list of great powers who have been brought to lie in the underworld. Edom, the north Syrian states and Sidon can scarcely be compared with Assyria, Elam and Egypt, Fohrer proposes to delete vss. 29-32 and Cooke also considers them secondary.[125] Zimmerli[126] considers verse 31 secondary. As these verses in question add little or nothing to the poem, which seems to me to finish satisfactorily at verse 28, I propose to omit them altogether from the exegesis.

Although I cavilled at accepting any hard and fast rules about the position of the deceased in the underworld, it is clear from this passage that there are various classes of dead mentioned. They are, the uncircumcised, those fallen by the sword, the mighty men of old and the men of the empires of Ezekiel's own day. Both Eichrodt and Zimmerli[127] think that because the mighty empires lie with the uncircumcised and those slain by the sword, they are, therefore, in some inferior position

as opposed to the heroes from the dawn of history who lie in honour. Zimmerli makes the further point that for the circumcised Egyptians to lie with the uncircumcised was a great shame.

This approach seems to me to be quite wrong. We are dealing with poetry. The prophet is singing a dirge over the fall of Egypt and pictures Pharaoh and all his host going into the underworld. Like Isaiah 14 we are in possession of a literary composition and must treat it as such and not use it as a source of information, nor attempt to draw consistent conclusions as to the substance of its imagery.

The word Sheol is rarely used, the favourite phrase being ארץ תחתית (תחתיות), "the land below," which stands in contrast to the ארץ חיים, "the land of the living."

D. PSALMS

The book of Psalms contains material on the underworld, its location and characteristics. In Ps. 6.6. we find;

כי אין במות זכרך בשאול מי יודה-לך

"For there is no memory of you in death, who praises you in Sheol?"

There is no need to alter זכרך, "remembrance," to the participle זכיך, "who remembers you," an emendation based on LXX ὁ μνημονεύων σου, suggested both by BH and Kraus.[128] MT reads perfectly well and need not be altered merely to achieve complete parallelism. Dahood points out that the abstract "memory" balances the concrete "who praises you."[129]

מות in this verse denotes the realm of death, the nether world.

The author of the psalm feels himself in his dire straits drawing near to Sheol, where all life comes to an abrupt end. In the land of the dead the deceased is cut off from God and all his mighty acts of salvation, he is completely removed from the cult and the temple. The dead cannot participate in the praise of Yahweh, which was so prominent an aspect of the worship of Israel. Ridderbos says that life in the underworld is described by this verse in these terms;
En daar (in Sjeol) een bestaan leiden, afgescheiden van het licht der levenden en ook van de gemeenschap met God.[130] Sheol is far from God and the living, indeed it is the antithesis of all life.

Psalm 9.14,15 brings out further this stark contrast between life and death,

14. חָנֵּנִי יְהוָה רְאֵה עָנְיִי מִשֹּׂנְאָי מְרוֹמְמִי מִשְּׁעָרֵי מָוֶת

"Be gracious to me, Yahweh, look on my affliction from those who hate me, raising me up from the gates of death."
Some commentators wish to change the imperatives in 14a to perfect tenses, e.g. Kraus, Gunkel and Duhm.[131] However an equal number wish to retain them. There are imperatives in verse 12; in verse 13 the justice of God is discussed and then, quite naturally, the psalmist cries to Yahweh (v. 14) for mercy and deliverance. Following also Ridderbos and Dahood, מִשֹּׂנְאָי , "those who hate me," is retained.[132] BH suggests מְנַשְּׂאִי (Piel participle of נשא) "you who raise me up," deleting the them redundant מְרוֹמְמִי , MT reads well as it stands. Enemies have driven the suppliant right to the very gates of the underworld, מָוֶת is again the underworld. Dahood retaining MT, regards the word as a pluralis majestatis, "my enemy", i.e. Death. This is not a very plausible suggestion as Death, in the guise of a personified figure, never appears with a pluralis majestatis in the Old Testament. I am not certain of Dahood's

rightness in attributing almost all reference to enemies in Psalms to the figure of "Death the Enemy" par excellence; most of them can be explained in terms of human enemies quite satisfactorily.

מרוממי , is a participle qualifying Yahweh, as the one who can raise from the gates of the underworld. שערי מות have already been discussed and need no further comment. They stand, in this verse, in contrast to the שערי - בת - ציון in the following verse:-

15. למען אספרה כל - תהלתיך בשערי - בת - ציון
אגילה בישועתך

"That I may relate all your praises, that I may rejoice in your salvation in the gates of the daughter of Zion."

This verse sets life over against death, praise and salvation over against silence and neglect, the land of the living over against the dead.

This psalm is a cultic psalm praising Yahweh as מלך . He is enthroned in Zion, his cult seat.[133] It appears that the שערי מות and the שערי בת - ציון have a cultic significance. In the underworld the deceased is excluded from taking part in the worship and praise of Yahweh, by the living community of Israel, specifically in relation to the worship of the Jerusalem temple denoted by the "Gates of the Daughter of Zion."

In Psalm 13.4 the psalmist asks Yahweh to answer him lest he sleep the sleep of death. Death here, as in Job 3, is considered to be a sleep

הביטה ענני יהוה אלהי האירה עיני פן - אישן המות

"Attend to my affliction, Yahweh my God, and lighten
my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death."

For עֲנֵנִי "answer me" read עָנְיִי , "my affliction."

Dust, as a feature of the underworld, is found in 22.16,

וְלַעֲפַר־מָוֶת תִּשְׁפְּתֵנִי

"You lay me in the dust of death."

Dahood translates עָפָר as "mud" and says that in this he is following Gunkel.[134] Now this is not entirely accurate, for Gunkel does not translate עָפָר in this verse as Kot, mud, as Dahood would have it, but as Staub, dust. Gunkel further says, nach dem Glauben das Altertums ist die Unterwelt mit Staub erfüllt, dort ist, "Staub ihre Nahrung, Kot ihre Speise." The underworld was filled with dust and the dead had to eat dust and clay.[135] The Akkadian word for dust was ipru, Heb. עָפָר . Thus Dahood has no need to translate, "mud," or "clay" for which the normal Hebrew words are יָוֵן and טִיט . He notes, of course, that the kingdom of Mot in the Ugaritic texts was one of mire and filth, but this does not mean to say we must alter the meaning of עָפָר , to suit a Ugaritic pattern. Verse 30b of the same psalm also has dust,

לְפָנָיו יִכְרְעוּ כָּל־יוֹרְדֵי עָפָר

"Before him bow all who descend to the dust."

This refers to those who go down to the underworld. It may be noted that Gunkel again translates עָפָר as Staub, "dust."[136]

Psalm 30.10 speaks of the isolation of the land of the dead, a place of dust without hope and without praise;

מה־בצע בדמי ברדתי אל־שחת היודך עפר
הידיך אמתך

"What profit is there in my silence (death), when I do down to the Pit? Does the dust praise you and relate your faithfulness?"

The question asked in the first half of the verse is rather peculiar. Duhm says that an appeal, of a very naive type, is made to divine self-respect and self-interest.[137] Kraus points out that the question is very singular, "What profit is there in my silence?" but the burden of it seems to be that the suppliant is pointing out to Yahweh that when he dies Yahweh will lose someone who praises him and who proclaims his אֱמֶת.[138] In any case this verse bears out the assertion that life and praise are forgotten amid the dust of the nether world.

Dahood again follows Gunkel - or so he says - and translates עפר as "mud."[139] Certainly Gunkel, in a description of the underworld says, Das in der Unterwelt befindliche ist"Kot"[140] The German word Kot denotes mire or mud, but also generally filthy conditions. Further Gunkel in his translation of this psalm renders עפר as Staub. His "Kot" is in inverted commas. This may seem a quibble, but it illustrates that Hebrew must not be trimmed down to fit into a Ugaritic bed. A commentator need not necessarily be expert in the tactics of Procrustes.

Psalm 63.10 draws attention to the depth of the underworld. The author says that those who seek his life will go down to "the land below," the תַּחְתִּיּוֹת הָאָרֶץ "the depths of the underworld."

69.3a speaks of the author sinking into the miry depths of the nether world,

טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד

"I sink in deep mud and there is no foothold."

This verse will be dealt with more fully in the chapter "The Waters of Death."[141] Mud is meant here, the word is יון not עפר . The domain of Mot was one of mire and filth. (for mud cf. also 40.3)

71.20b contains an interesting phrase,

ומתהמות הארץ תשוב תעלני

"You will bring me up again from the watery depths of the underworld."

Dahood cites an interesting Ugaritic parallel taking the text from UT,[142]

t'ant . šmm . ᶜm . 'arṣ

thmt . ᶜmn . kbkbm

Dahood, taking 'arṣ in the sense of "underworld" translates thus,

"the meeting of heaven with the nether world,
of the depths with the stars."[143]

It is only fair to note that Driver in CML translates the phrase thus,

"The sighing of the heaven unto the earth
of the ocean unto the stars."[144]

The whole centres on the meaning of t'ant. Gordon thinks it means "rain" and translates, "the rain of heaven."[145] Aisleitner suggests Zuraunen, "sighing", "murmur".[146] Driver explains his translation further, by saying that t'ant, "sighing," denotes the coming rain preceded by the sounds of nature.[147] It seems thus, that the meaning of the word is obscure. It may be observed that as there is a question of a secret in the relevant passage in the Baal Epic, the underworld may, in fact, be meant, as it was regarded as the place of secrets and whispers. If this

is so, and it is only a possibility, we may have here the picture of the underworld lying in the depths of the ocean; heaven and the underworld and the oceans depths with the stars standing in parallel.

Psalm 88 summarises, most conveniently, most of the characteristics of the land of the dead.

5. נחשבתי עם־יורדי בור הייתי כגבר אין־אי׳׳ל

"I was reckoned among those who go down to the Pit, I was as a man without strength."

Dahood equates this with UT 51:vii:8,9.

tspr . byrdm . 'ars

"Be numbered with those who go down to the underworld,"[148]

The dead man is numbered with those who go down to the underworld, he is entered in the census lists of Sheol, where, according to verse 6, he is cut off from all life and forgotten by all who are still alive;

במתים חפשי כמו חללים שכבי קבר
אשר לא זכרתם עוד והמה מידך נגזרו

"Free among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you do not remember any more, for they are cut off from your hand."

חָפְשִׁי , lit. "free," occasions at first glance, some difficulty. BH proffers two alternatives נִמְשַׁלְתִּי , "I am comparable to," or נִשְׁבַּחְתִּי , "I am forgotten, forsaken." Gunkel points out that no emendation is satisfactory and suggests that חפשי may mean, "free as a bird."[149] LXX has ἐν νεκροῖς ἐλεύθερος , "free among the dead."

This reading supports MT. The translation of חפשי as "free" is supported by the new edition of K-B which translates בין המתים חפשי as, "free among the dead.[150] This is taken from the principal meaning of the word חפשי, "a free soldier or a freeman" as opposed to a serf.

Some commentators have endeavoured to correct the text and to connect the phrase חפשי בין המתים with the phrase בית החפשית in 2 Kings 15.5 and the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 26.21, which would appear from the context to be a sort of hospital, a "house of separation" as Gray suggests.[151] Montgomery and Gehman point out that in the Amarna Tablets hubšu is a "free citizen."[152]

Dahood connects חפשי, following the phrase in Kings, to the Ugaritic word bthtpṯt . 'arṣ. He separates the first word into bt . hpṯt and gains the rather absurd translation, "the nether house of cots," into which Baal must descend. hpṯt, according to Aisleitner, means "nether world."[153] Gordon translates the phrase as "into the nether regions."[154] Driver translates hpṯt as "netherworld," indeed from the context it can mean little else.[155] Even if hpṯt is a couch or bed, Dahood's translation of "nether house of cots" is ludicrous.

Two things militate against his explanation;

1. Hpṯt is, in fact, neither חפשי nor, for that matter, בית החפשית . hpṯy or hpṯyt do not exist, as far as we know, in Ugaritic.

2. There is a Ugaritic word, however, meaning "nomad or serf," hpš[156] (cf. Akkadian hubšu and Hebrew חפשי).

In Job 3.17 Job wishes to be free from earthly problems and worries among the dead in the underworld. This is very probably what is intended here. The Psalmist sinks into the realm of death where his worries no longer matter. He is "free" among the dead in the nether world. In view of these arguments it is best to retain MT and translate "free among the dead."

Verse 7 finds the author in the depths of the underworld;

שתני בבור תחתיות במחשכים במצולות

"You have put me in the deepest pit, in gloomy regions,
in deep places."

Verses 11-13 tell of the land where the wonders of God are absent, where praise, faithfulness and divine aid are non-existent.

11. הלמתים תעשה פלא אם רפאים יקומו יודוך

"Do you work a wonder for the dead or do the shades rise up
and praise you?"

(רפאים is discussed fully in the next chapter).

Yahweh does not perform wonders for the dead, the shades cannot praise him, for they have no memory of his mighty acts. Verse 12 asks whether the faithfulness and mercy of Yahweh are found in the realm of death;

12. היספר בקבר חסדך אמונתך באבדון

"Is your mercy told of in the grave, your faithfulness in Abaddon?"

In the underworld Yahweh is not praised, for Abaddon is the place of those who have perished for ever. The inability to take part in the worship and praise of the living God is one of the most poignant sorrows of the underworld.

קֶבֶר , here means "underworld," and not an individual grave.

Verse 13 depicts the underworld as a place of darkness and forgetfulness;

13. הֲיִוָּדַע בַּחֹשֶׁךְ פִּלְאֶךָ וְצִדְקָתְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ נְשִׁיָּה

"Are your wonders known in the dark land, your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

The underworld is a place of forgetfulness. One of the rivers of the Greek Hades was Lethe, from which the shades drank that they might forget for ever the life which they had formerly known in the world of the living.

The world of the dead was also a world of eternal silence.

94.17 לוּלֵי יְהוָה עֶזְרָתָה לִּי כִּמְעַט שָׁכְנָה דוּמָה נַפְשִׁי

"If Yahweh had not been a help to me, in a short time I would have dwelt in the (land of) silence."

114.17 makes the connection between the land of the dead and silence more evident;

לֹא הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ־יָהּ וְלֹא כָל־יֹרְדֵי דוּמָה

"The dead do not praise Yahweh, nor those who go down to the (land of) silence."

יָרַד is used normally with בּוֹר or אֶרֶץ, here with דּוּמָה thus giving the word a more concrete significance.

Silent death and forsakenness in the sunken realm of the dead awaited the dead Israelite; darkness, silence and an aching sense of abandonment were his constant companions in Sheol. From the book of Psalms a picture of the underworld can be drawn, which makes existence there the antithesis of life in the land of the living, in fact life in Sheol must be called death.

E. The Pentateuch and the Historical Books

The Pentateuch and the Old Testament History are notable for their silence on the subject of the underworld. They contain no lengthy descriptions of the realm of death and so can contribute but little towards the theme of this chapter. In Gen. 37.35 Jacob says that he will go down to Sheol mourning for his son Joseph, so that Joseph, already there, will see his father's grief;

וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־אֵרֵד אֶל־בְּנִי אָבֵל שְׁאוֹלָה וַיִּבְךְּ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו

"And Jacob said, "For I will go down to my son mourning to Sheol," and his father wept for Joseph."

Sheol is the place where all men must go, the land of the dead beneath the earth. Jacob implies here, that if he goes to Sheol mourning, then Joseph will see that he has been grieving for him.

Deut. 32.22 merely tells us that Sheol is deep, עַד שְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּיָּה, "to deep Sheol."

The historical books say nothing on the subject and their attitude is best summed up by David's reply to his courtiers who rebuke him for not grieving for the death of his child by Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 12.23;

וְעַתָּה מֵת לָמָּה זֶּה אֲנִי צוֹם הַאוּכַל לְהַשִׁיבוֹ עוֹד
אֲנִי הֹלֵךְ אֵלָיו וְהוּא לֹא־יָשׁוּב אֵלָי

"And now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

There is but one way which leads from life to death and Sheol. David will, in the course of time, follow the path which his child has already taken. Only thus will he see the child again, for the land of the dead is a country of no return.

F. Ecclesiastes

Some verses from Ecclesiastes emphasise the finality and the vanity of death and the state of inanition in which the deceased exist, if they can be said to exist at all.

3.20 הכל הולך אל-מקום אחד הכל היה מן-העפר
והכל שב אל-העפר

"All go to one place, all are from dust and all turn to dust again."

This verse harks back to the forming of man in Gen. 2.7,19 and his mortality 3.19. Sheol is the land of dust. Yet this verse very brutally links man and animal in the same commonality of fate. רוח is taken from man and animal alike.[157] This saying of Koheleth is hard and bitter, man and animal alike go to dust. הכל refers to men and beasts whose similarity in respect of their end has been dealt with by Koheleth in verse 19.

9.10 כל אשר תמצא ידך לעשות בכחך עשה
כי אין מעשה וחשבון ודעת וחכמה
בשאול אשר אתה הלך שמה

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your power, for their is neither task, nor thought, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither you are going."

This verse again emphasises the lack of activity, both physical and mental, in the underworld. Wisdom is only to be found in the land of the living. This last statement is interesting in view of the fact that in Job 28.14 it is categorically stated that wisdom is not to be found in the land of the living and (verse 22) the realm of the dead has heard only a whisper of it. Gordis says that Koheleth generally espouses the Old Hebrew view

of the after-life as a shadowy, gloomy existence. He further comments that this conservatism hung on among wisdom writers even when replaced outside by other views.[158]

In Chapter 12 old age is followed by death, v. 5b

כי הלך האדם אל־בית עולמו והסבבו בשוק הספדים

"For man goes to his eternal home and the mourners go about the streets."

בית עולם , Hertzberg and Ringgren both note that, "house of eternity," is an Egyptian expression.[159] Gordis lists

τόπος αἰώνιος , "eternal place" (Tobit 3.6)

and the Talmudic בית עלמא , "eternal house."[160]

The vanity of life is climaxed by the vanity of death at which hired mourners carry out their professional duties. Thus the book of Ecclesiastes agrees with the Pentateuch and the historical books in painting the classical Old Testament picture of life in Sheol as "death." Their message about death is simple, final and austere, it is the end of life.

Further comment about the use of the passages discussed in this chapter will be dealt with in the conclusion.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. K. Tallqvist, op.cit. (Sumerisch-Akkadische Namen) p. 2
2. ibid., p. 3
3. K-B, שאול p. 963 and שׁאל p. 954
4. BDB, p. 1001
5. Tallqvist, op.cit. p. 3
6. Baal I* v 15 f CML p. 106, cf. also p. 102 Baal II viii 8f where Gpn and Ugr, the two messengers of Baal, are asked to go to the end of the world to enter the underworld.
7. Baal I i 7f CML p. 108
8. cf. above p. 41 and p. 65
9. Tallqvist, op.cit., pp. 11 f
10. For the notes on these older commentators see de Bondt, op.cit., (Wat leert het Oude Testament) p. 54
11. M. Jastrow, The Babylonian Term šu' alû AJSL xiv (Chicago 1897-98) pp. 165 ff
12. W.F. Albright, Mesopotamian Elements in Canaanite Eschatology "Oriental Studies dedicated to Paul Haupt." (1926) pp. 143 ff šû'-ara p. 151
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17. G. Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, (Kommentar zum A.T.) (Gütersloh, 1963) p. 122 and n. 28.
18. N. Tur Sinai, The Book of Job, (Jerusalem, 1957) p. 62.
19. G. Holscher, Hiob (Handbuch zum A.T.) (Tübingen, 1952) p. 16.
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22. Tallqvist, op.cit., pp. 17 and 22
23. E. Dhorme, The Book of Job, (London, 1967) p. 34
24. M.H. Pope, Job (Anchor Bible, New York, 1965) p. 31
25. Driver and Gray, op.cit., pp. 37 f
26. Tur Sinai, op.cit., p. 63
27. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 178
28. cf. above p. 43
29. Hölscher, op.cit., p. 29
30. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 155
31. BDB p. 690
32. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 155
33. Tur-Sinai, op.cit., pp. 184 f and
"A Hebrew Incantation against Night-Demons"
JNES vi (1947) pp. 185 f
34. Tallqvist, op.cit., p. 16
35. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 253
36. ibid., pp. 253
37. Hölscher, op.cit., pp. 42 f
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38. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 255
39. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 414
40. Pope, op.cit., p. 196
41. See below ch. 4. p.

42. J. Pedersen, Israel, its Life and Culture i and ii (Copenhagen, 1964) pp. 461 ff

43. J. Skinner, Isaiah, i (Cambridge Bible, 1925) on p. 121 he speaks of Assyrian records which refer to the felling of cedars in Lebanon, for the building of ships etc.

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46. Duhm, op.cit., p. 96

47. R. de Vaux, "Les Textes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancien Testament" RB 46 (1937) p. 547

48. B.S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament, Studies in Biblical Theology 27 (London, 1962) pp. 69 f

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52. Nikkal and the Kathirat ii 12 ff CML pp. 126 f

53. Aqhat II ii 25 ff CML p. 51

54. CML p. 146 n.22

55. P. Grelot, "Isaïe xiv 12-18 et son arriere-plan mytholgique," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 149, 150 (Paris, 1956) p. 20

56. UT, p. 380 No. 589

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58. Z.E. Harris, A Grammar of the Phoenician Language (New Haven, 1936) p. 149.

59. R. Graves, The Greek Myths, (London, 1965) p. 156

60. ibid., p. 303

61. ibid., p. 299

62. ibid., p. 149

63. ibid., p. 32

64. Baal III i 25 ff CML p. 111 Driver also, (CML p. 140 n.28) says that Athtar was the son of Baal and Dame Athirat. He was, according to Driver, the male form of the Akkadian Ishtar, the morning star.

65. W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, 1942) p. 84

66. Grelot, op.cit., pp. 40 f

67. Baal III* c CML p. 77

68. D.W. Thomas, "Some further Remarks on unusual ways of expressing the Superlative in Hebrew" VT xviii (Leyden, 1968 p. 121

69. E.J. Young, The Book of Isaiah vol. i (Michigan, 1965) p. 444

70. Baal V iii 44 CML p. 87

71. CML, p. 21 n. 1

72. Baal I* i 9 ff CML pp. 102 ff

73. Baal II v 23 CML pp. 96 f (cf. also Baal II iv 19 - on the same page, where Baal also goes to "the heights of Zaphon."

74. Baal V iii 43 f CML p. 87

75. Aqhat I i 43 CML p. 59

76. W. Beyerlin, Herkunft und Geschichte der Ältesten Sinaitraditionen (Tübingen, 1961) p. 125, Yahweh as a cloud rider.

77. Duhm, op.cit., p. 97

78. E.J. Kissane, Isaiah, vol. i (Dublin, 1960) p. 165

79. O. Procksch, Jesaja i (Kommentar zum A.T., Leipzig, 1930) p. 199

80. ibid., p. 199 (following Kittel)

81. Marti, op.cit., p. 126

82. Skinner, op.cit., p. 123

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87. Childs, op.cit., p. 69

88. Marti, op.cit., p. 262

89. W. Eichrodt, Der Prophet Esekiel chs. 19-48 (Das A.T.D., Göttingen, 1966) p. 248

90. W.O.E. Oesterley, A History of Israel ii (Oxford, 1957) pp. 11 f

91. See Chapter 4, "The Waters of Death."

92. J.H. van Dijk, Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Rome, 1968) pp. 42 ff

93. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel (Biblischer Kommentar A.T., Neukirchen, 1969) p. 605

94. Eichrodt, op.cit., p. 247

95. G. Fohrer, Ezekiel (Handbuch zum A.T. Tübingen, 1955) p. 153

G.A. Cooke, Ezekiel (ICC Edinburgh, 1936) p. 295

A. Bertholet, Hesekiel (Handbuch zum A.T., Tübingen, 1936) p. 94

96. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 611

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Fohrer, op.cit., p. 153

Bertholet, op.cit., p. 94

97. See chapter 4, for a more detailed discussion.

98. ANET(1) "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living" pp. 47 ff

"The Epic of Gilgamesh" pp. 72 ff

99. BWL pp. 150 ff

100. K-B(2) p. 7. ברא ,

101. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 750

Fohrer, op.cit., p. 175

Bertholet, op.cit., p. 110

102. ANET(1) "Enuma Elish" Tablet I 115 ff p. 62

103. Eichrodt, op.cit., p. 295

104. ibid., p. 292

Fohrer, op.cit., p. 175

105. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 750

106. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 175

Eichrodt, op.cit., p. 291

107. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 175

108. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 761

109. A.D. Blackwood, Ezekiel Prophecy of Hope (Michigan, 1965) p. 197

110. Cooke, op.cit., p. 250

111. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 774

Fohrer, op.cit., p. 179

Bertholet, op.cit., p. 113

112. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 774

113. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 179

114. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 775

115. Bertholet, op.cit., p. 113

116. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 786

Fohrer, op.cit., p. 179

Cooke, op.cit., p. 351

117. My supervisor had previously pointed out to me the hopeless condition of these two verses.

118. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 179

119. Zimmerli, op.cit., pp. 776 ff

120. ibid., pp. 787 ff

121. ibid., p. 788

122. Cooke, op.cit., p. 354

123. H.G. May, Ezekiel (IB Nashville, 1956) p. 243

Cooke, op.cit., p. 354

Fohrer, op. cit., p. 181

124. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 789

125. Fohrer, op.cit., p. 179

Cooke, op.cit., p. 354

126. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 779

127. Eichrodt, op.cit., pp. 301 ff

Zimmerli, op.cit., pp. 783 ff

128. H.J. Kraus, Psalmen i (Biblischer Kommentar A.T., Neukirchen, 196

129. M. Dahood, Psalms i (Anchor Bible, New York, 1965) p. 38

His conclusions must be treated with the greatest caution.

130. J. Ridderbos, De Psalmen (Commentar op het Oude Testament, Kampen, 1955) p. 50

131. Kraus, op.cit., p. 76

H. Gunkel, Die Psalmen II (Göttingen, 1926) p. 35

B. Duhm, Die Psalmen, (Tübingen, 1922) p. 39

132. Ridderbos, op.cit., p. 85

Dahood, op.cit., p. 57

133. H.J. Kraus, Worship in Israel (Oxford, 1966) pp. 204 f

134. Dahood, op.cit., p. 140

135. Gunkel, op.cit., pp. 89, 92 and 96

136. ibid., p. 90

137. Duhm, op.cit., p. 123

138. Kraus, op.cit., p.243

139. Dahood, op.cit., p. 183

140. Gunkel, op.cit., p. 126 for Staub also p. 128

141. See below pp. 230 ff.

142. UT Ant . iii . 21 f p. 253

143. Dahood, op.cit., p. 176

144. Baal V iii 39 f CML pp. 86 f

145. UT p. 496 n. 2507

146. J. Aisleitner, Wörterbuch der Ugaritischen Sprache (Berlin, 1965) p. 27 No. 304

147. CML p. 86 n.9 and p. 152 n.18

148. Dahood, ii op.cit., p. 404

149. Gunkel, op.cit., p. 382

150. K-B ii (ed. W. Baumgartner and B. Hartmann) p. 328

151. J. Gray, Kings (London, 1964) p. 560

152. J.H. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, Kings (ICC Edin. 1951) p. 454

153. Aisleitner, op.cit., p. 116 n. 1071

154. UT p. 404 No. 995.

155. Baal I* v 14 f CML pp. 106 f and Baal II viii 5 ff pp. 102 ff

156. UT p. 400 n. 930 = Heb. תשת

157. H.W. Hertzberg, Der Prediger (Kommentar zum A.T. Gütersloh, 1963) p. 111

158. R. Gordis, Koheleth, the Man and his World (New York, 1955) p. 297

159. Hertzberg, op.cit., p. 213
H. Ringgren, Prediger (DATD) (Göttingen, 1962) p. 247

160. Gordis, op.cit., p. 337

CHAPTER 3

The Dwellers in the Land of the Dead

In so far as the Old Testament is concerned, death comes inevitably to end life. The fate of every man and woman, even of children, is best summed up in the closing words of Genesis 3.19,

עד שובך אל־האדמה כי ממנה לקחת
כי עפר אתה ואל־עפר תשוב

"..... until you return to the earth, for you were taken from it, dust you are and to dust you shall return."

The two notable exceptions of Enoch (Gen. 5.24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2.11) merely serve to prove the general rule which held both kings and commoners alike in its grip. The Old Testament attitude towards death, which was direct and realistic at its best, can be found in the words of David who refused, even at the behest of his courtiers, to mourn for his dead child by Bathsheba, (2 Samuel 12.23 NEB)

"But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him; he will not come back to me."

When Yahweh takes away the breath of life all mankind return to dust (Pss. 90.3; 104.29; Job 34.14,15). All men, even the righteous, had to take the one way path to the grave and Sheol. In fact, there exist remnants of an old belief that the individual, upon death, went to the family grave, where all the ancestors dwelt. This belief is mentioned by Eichrodt.[1] There is, in the Old Testament, ample evidence of a desire to be buried in the family tomb along with one's forefathers. This can be seen in several passages which recount the death of some of the outstanding figures in the Old Testament.

In Gen. 47.29,30, Jacob begs Joseph, his son, not to let him be buried in Egypt, but earnestly requests that he be allowed to lie עם - אבתי , "with my fathers," בקברתם , "in their grave." There is no need to alter MT בקברותם to בקברתי "in my grave." In Genesis 50.13 we read of Jacob's burial in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought from Ephron, son of Zohar the Hittite (Gen. 23.1-20). Thus Jacob was buried with his forefathers in their grave, and so MT should stand. Gen. 50.25 recounts the oath which Joseph extracted from his brothers, that they would carry his bones to the land of Canaan. In the Hexateuch great significance is attached to the keeping of this promise, for, Exodus 13.19 tells of the beginning of the journey of the bones under the supervision of Moses,

ויקח משה את-עצמות יוסף עמו

"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him."

In Joshua 24.32 the burial of the bones of Joseph at Shechem, on ground which belonged to Jacob, is recorded.

In 2 Samuel 2.32 Asael, who had been murdered by Joab, was buried in the grave of his father in Bethlehem. Ahithophel, when his good counsel was rejected, went to his own city and house, set his affairs in order and then hanged himself. He, too, was buried in the tomb of his father (2 Samuel 17.23). Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was buried in the tomb of Abner at Hebron (2 Samuel 4.12). This was presumably because he could not, due to force of circumstances, be buried with his father and so he was interred with one of his father's greatest partisans.

The bones of Saul and Jonathan were taken from under the tamarisk tree, where the men of Jabesh Gilead had buried them, and buried in the tomb of Kish, Saul's father (2 Samuel 21.14).

Later in the Old Testament, Nehemiah petitioned the king of Persia that he might return to his own land to rebuild, "the town of my fathers' sepulchres," העיר בית־קברות אבותי (Nehemiah 2.3,5).

It may be concluded from remarks in the Old Testament that it was considered a "bad thing" not to be buried beside one's fathers'. 1 Kings 13 tells the tale of the prophet who allowed himself to be duped by an old prophet of Bethel into disobeying the word of Yahweh. For this reason the old prophet cursed the other prophet so that his body might not rest in the grave of his fathers' (verse 22).

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, who was a most unsatisfactory monarch, according to the standards of the Deuteronomic historian, was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings, ולא בקברות המלכים, as the Book of Chronicles expressly states (2 Chron. 21.20). Ahaz, similarly, because of his misdeeds was not buried "in the tomb of the kings of Israel" (2 Chron. 28.27). Joash, because of his apostasy was not buried in the tombs of the kings, although he was interred in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 24.25).

There are several phrases used to express this wish to be buried along with one's forefathers:

שכב עם־אבות, "to lie with one's fathers." This occurs frequently, Gen. 47.43: Deut. 31.16: 2 Sam. 7.12: 1 Kings 1.21; 2.10; 11.21,43; 14.20,31; 15.8,24; 16.6,28; 22.40,51; 2 Kings 8.24; 10.35; 13.9,13; 14.16,22,29; 15.7,22,38; 16.20; 20.21; 21.18; 24.6, and in the corresponding passages in Chronicles. It is more than likely that the original significance of the phrase was that everyone was laid in the ancestral grave. But the expression is used repeatedly when a king, good or bad, dies. Thus the use of the

expression seems gradually to have altered. It is used of David, Jehoram, Joash and Ahaz, who were certainly not buried in the same grave as their forefathers. In most of the cases in Kings the impression given is that the phrase was employed as a synonym for "to die."

Another expression used in various forms is:

נֶאֱסַף אֶל-עַמּוֹ - to be gathered to one's people/kindred.

וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל-עַמָּיו - Gen. 25.8; 25.17; 35.29; 49.33.

וַיֶּאֱסֹף אֶל-עַמּוֹ - Gen. 49.29.

implied (אֶל-עַמָּיו) וַיֵּאָסֶף - Numbers 20.26.

וְנֶאֱסַפְתָּ אֶל-עַמֶּיךָ - Numbers 27.13

תֵּאָסֵף אֶל-עַמֶּיךָ - Numbers 31.2

וְהֵאָסֵף אֶל-עַמֶּיךָ - Deut. 32.50.

וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל-אֲבוֹתָיו - Judges 2.10

עַל-אֲבֹתֶיךָ - Kings 22.20

This phrase probably points beyond the more primitive family grave to the assembly of the dead in the underworld. It is used of Abraham, Ishmael and Aaron who were certainly not represented in the sources as having been buried with their predecessors. In some cases it may mean simply, "to die," as in the case of Josiah (2 Kings 22.20).

Thus the Old Testament gives ample evidence of the existence of an, undoubtedly primitive, belief in a family grave where a dead man joined his ancestors. Alongside this there is the conception of the larger community of the dead fellow-countrymen in the underworld, the dead of Israel who waited for their posterity to come down to them, "I shall go to him; he will not come back to me."

The dwellers in the land of the dead were not only Israelite in origin. For, with the passing of time, Sheol acquired an international significance in the prophetic books as Israel became more involved in the world around her. Isaiah 14.9 speaks of the kings of the nations who rise up from their thrones, set in the underworld, to meet the tyrant king of Babylon as he descends to his last resting-place. Ezekiel 26.20 depicts the prince of Tyre en route for the nether world. In Chapter 32 of the same book there is a highly international group of rulers and their subjects all together in the underworld, Egypt, Assyria, Elam, Mesech-Tubal, Edom, Sidon and the princes of the north. It may therefore be said that the Old Testament conceived of all men coming at last to the land of the dead to join the company of the shades already there. Alongside this belief exist the fragments of an earlier belief in the family grave where the ancestors dwelt and where it was highly desirable for a man to be buried.

The word רְפָאִים in the Old Testament

(a) rp'um in the Ugaritic Texts.

C. Virolleaud, one of the earliest editors of the Ugaritic texts, regarded the rp'um as neither shades of the departed, nor people of a former age. He observed from the fragments entitled "Rephaim" that these beings were seven or eight in number and this could not be regarded as the massed company of the dead.[2] This enumeration of the rp'um occurs in only one place,

tmn . bqrb . hkly.

"eight within my palace." (speaking of the rp'um)[3]

Because of their apparent connection with agriculture, Virolleaud thought that they must fulfil some agrarian role as they are pictured as riding to the threshing-floors and plantations,

'asr . sswn . tṯmd . dg⌜ . .

t'ln . lmrkbthm . tḫ/ṯy . ' l'rhm⌝

~~tkln~~ tlkn . ym . wtn . 'ahr . š/p̄šm bṯlṯ⌝

mġy rp'um . lgrnt . ⌜'elnym . l⌝

mt't .

"They did tie the horses (to the poles). they

yoked . . . . . ,

They climbed into their chariots, they came ⌜on their asses⌝;

they went (one) day and a second, (and) afterwards at

(the rising of) the sun ⌜on the third⌝

the shades did arrive at the threshing-floors,

⌜the ghosts at⌝

the plantations."[4]

They also participated in the anointing of Baal as king, when he took up the throne of his kingship.[5] Virolleaud further observed that the word rp'um is often parallel to 'ilnym. He regarded this word as either,

(a) An ethnic title derived from דָּן , the chief town in the territory of the tribe of Dan (Jos. 19.43).

(b) An adjective derived from אֵלָה , "oak" specifically the oak at Shechem (Gen. 35.4).

In the former case 'ilnym would be an ethnic group and in the latter, connected with the oak, they would be some sort of dryad (tree-nymph). Virolleaud believes that he has found the Hebrew כתף in the Ugaritic ṯkm (Rephaim III ii 5). Driver translates the phrase ṯkm . bm . ṯkm in that line as "side by side," (lit. "shoulder by shoulder").[6] In the context this is much more satisfactory than

the rather obscure suggestion of Virolleaud, that the Ugaritic word is connected with Shechem.

Indeed it is very difficult to uphold either of the explanations of Virolleaud. 'ilnym cannot be connected with the Danite town of אילון , the two words are simply not the same, nor is it any easier to link 'ilnym with אלון "oak", whether at Shechem or anywhere else. Certainly 'ilnym is frequently found in parallel to rp'um, but Virolleaud's explanation of the former is so vague and unsubstantiated that it is of no help in giving the latter a precise meaning. He concludes his survey by saying that in Israelite thought these figures became personifications of races which had disappeared from the land. His theories have not been followed in any great detail by other scholars.

René Dussaud offers a completely different explanation of the term. He first of all notes, as does everyone else, the parallelism between rp'um and 'ilnym, but he rejects Virolleaud's explanation of the latter term. He suggests that 'ilnym is to be equated with the Phoenician word 'alonim, "gods."[7] But it must be observed that only אלהי (אלה) is found in Phoenician itself.[8] The form 'alonim is attested once in a Latin transcription in Plautus. The word [מ]אלם is found in a 1st A.D. Century Neo-Punic text (see later in the chapter). He notes that in the Ugaritic texts these beings have, apparently, a chief rp'u b'l, which Dussaud vocalises Rapha-Baal.[9] Dussaud regards two explanations of this figure as possible, but on balance prefers the second. They are,

1. rp'u b'l could be translated "Baal heals" and then we would have to do with a deity on the model of Repu-El or the Palmyrene Shadrapha, one of whose chief attributes was that of healing.[10]

2. If rp'u is taken as being in the construct state this indicates that the word stands in a special relationship to b'l which follows it. Dussaud says that Rapha-Baal is a vocable of the same type as Aliyan Baal or Yedoud El Ghezer. He is thus a figure closely attached to Baal, but he is also chief of the rp'um, thus he is probably Aliyan Baal.

Dussaud further notes that the Rephaim harness their horses and ride to the plantations and the threshing-floors. They were riders on the clouds and acolytes at the enthronement of Baal, who accompanied the god on his descent to the underworld. They were, says Dussaud, a divine aristocracy and the satellites of Baal. Some mention of a funerary function on the part of the Rephaim does exist in the Ugaritic texts. They were sent by Shapash the sun-goddess to be the companions of Baal in the underworld. This function became eventually their primary role in the popular mind. Dussaud finally indicates that the term רפא was used at a later period by the Phoenicians and the Hebrews as a term for the dead.[11]

As far as Dussaud's theories are concerned the following criticisms may be levelled,

(i) I can find no evidence that rp' means "to heal" in Ugaritic. Neither Gordon, nor Aisleitner, nor Driver give this meaning for rp'. Indeed they do not regard rp'u in rp'u b'l as a verb but as a noun.[12] רפא does mean "to heal" in Phoenician and Hebrew, but this is not necessarily its meaning in Ugaritic. Thus Dussaud's explanation may be questioned.

(ii) Repu-Baal is the mhr, the champion ("keen soldier") of Baal and Anat (Gordon thinks that rp'u b'l means "soldiers of Baal," rp'u being the construct plural of rp'um sic rapa'û [ma] b'l.)[13] He is merely, in that case, the champion of Baal, no closer relationship is indicated.

(iii) Further to (ii), it may be said that Aliyan Baal is none other than Baal himself; Aliyan Baal appears frequently in the texts in parallel to Baal. In Rephaim III ii 26 Aliyan Baal is found once.

Driver's translation of "victor Baal," is satisfying in all cases,[14] Kapelrud shows that the phrase Aliyan Baal appears in the texts seventy times and that he is Baal himself. 'al'iyan, "the one who prevails," from l'y, "to be strong."[15] This derivation is accepted by Gordon, who cites in support the Akkadian le'û, "to win."[16] Baal is the "victor" over Yam and Mot, his two chief adversaries. But there is no apparent link with Repu-Baal.

From Dussaud we pass to Ginsberg who quotes the following Ugaritic passage before considering the word rp'um (I quote the text from Ginsberg);

m'id rm [. krt]
btk . rp'i . 'ar [ṣ]
bphr . qbṣ . dtn

1. Be greatly exalted, [Keret],
2. in the midst of the community of the land,
3. in the number of the population of the realm.[17]

Ginsberg points out that the meaning of rp'i is revealed by its parallelism to qbṣ, the root of which means "to collect" in Hebrew (קבץ). Evidently rp' meant originally "to join", from this

it is an easy step to the Arabic sense of "to mend" and the Hebrew meaning of "to heal" (lit. "to join together"). This idea of joining or gathering underlies all uses of rp'i in the texts. Thus the Hebrew and Phoenician Rephaim were literally "those gathered in the underworld."[18] Driver also translates rp'i in this text in a similar way, "congregation."[19] This would be the obvious meaning of rp'i, standing as it does in parallel to qbṣ whose meaning is very well attested. As we shall note below this is a clue to the meaning of rp'um in the Ugaritic texts.

The main evidence for the meaning of the word rp'um comes from the very fragmentary text entitled "Rephaim."

Tablet I col. i is very broken. It deals, apparently, with a sevenfold sacrifice and a sacrificial feast with a secret council. Then the shades are bidden to eat and drink on a summer's day (bym qẓ).[20] In column ii it is said that the rp'um, if indeed tmn refers to rp'um at all, are eight in number. They then yoke their horses to their chariots, mount their asses and after a journey of three days they reach the threshing-floors of El and the plantations. Danel, the mt rp'e, states that the rp'um will eat summer fruit and apples out of a bowl in the threshing-floors of El and amid the plantations of fig-trees.[21]

Tablet II col. i tells of El summoning the shades to his house bty, "to my house," and hkly, "to my palace." His shrine is also mentioned, 'aṯrh (Accadian ašru, Hebrew אשרת).[22]

In Tablet III cols. i and ii, the shades are again summoned to the palace and shrine of El, where Repu-Baal, the champion of Baal and Anat, is to be honoured. Baal is to be king and they are to take part in his anointing. It seems that the enthronement and the anointing of Baal take place in the threshing-floors and plantations after the

rp'um have arrived. There is another feast which honours Baal, Anat, Repu-Baal and Ḫyly the king. Then the rp'um eat for six days of the produce of the land. Here the fragment breaks off.[23] This banquet may have had some connection with the feast which Baal gave to celebrate the completion of his Palace.[24]

Gray has dealt very fully with the problem of the rp'um in two articles. In the first[25] article he points out that as the rp'um were only eight in number then it is difficult to see in them, either an ethnic group or the shades of the dead.[26] As previously mentioned the word "eight," tmn is mentioned only once and, as far as I can judge, it may not apply to rp'um at all. It is probable that it does, but not absolutely certain. Gray also makes the very valid point that the relationship of rp'u b'l to rp'um is not at all clear. He, following the general trend, indicates the obvious parallelism of rp'um and 'ilnym, regarding 'ilnym as meaning, "divine beings."[27] The originality of Gray's contribution to the study of rp'um, lies in his great emphasis on the importance of the connection between mt . rp'e and rp'um. Danel is the mt . rp'e and the mt hrnmy (a term which defies any explanation).

tmz' . kst . dn'el . mt
rp'e . 'al (l) . ġzr . mt hrnmy.

"Danel the Rephaite did rend (his)
cloak, the hero the hrnmy-man (his) robe."[28]

. . . . . whn ỉb/[']_7
bymm . 'apnk . dn'el . mt
rp'e . 'a⟨p⟩hn . ġzr . mt hrnmy
ytṯû . . . . . .

" And lo! on
the seventh
day, thereupon Danel the Rephaite,
thereat the hero, the hrnmy-man
raised himself up."[29]

Gray thinks that rp'e should be taken as a passive participle of the qatil type signifying the man "who has been healed," in the sense of having his potency restored. But qatil participles are normally active, thus mt. rp'e, would have to be rendered "the man who heals," if rp' does mean "to heal" in Ugaritic.[30] Further, Danel is called the mt . rp'e from the beginning of the legend of Aqhat, even before he has his "potency restored" by El. However, the connection between mt . rp'e and rp'um remains obscure, despite the fact that Danel is mentioned in the fragment, "Rephaim." Gray continues his study with the observation that there are passages in the text which suggest that the Rephaim were not divine but human in status. He regards the use of horses and chariots as indicating not only the humanity, but also the rank of the rp'um, for only the great and wealthy rode on horses or in chariots. The problem of the parallel word 'ilnym, he solves by suggesting that, as the king in the Ancient Orient was connected with fertility in his capacity of god-king, the rp'um is a term applied to the king of Ugarit and his associates in their ritual function; they are called 'ilnym, "divine persons," in view of that ritual function. The rp'um were, then, according to Gray, most probably cultic functionaries associated with the king of Ugarit, possibly chiefs of clans or wards in the town and realm of Ugarit. Their duties might be connected with the inspection of fruit-trees, vines and corn upon the threshing-floors. In due time the term

was used to refer only to the dead who were provided with offerings to secure the fertility of the land and this is what the term came to mean in Israel and Phoenicia.

The most which may be said in favour of Gray's theory is that the rp'um did have some interest in plants, fruit and threshing-floors, but the reason for this is not given in the texts. Danel and Aqhat do seem to have been connected with fertility in some manner for the land becomes sterile after the death and dismemberment of Aqhat.[31] Danel toured his parched realm praying for rain and embracing the parched ears of corn in an attempt to restore fertility.

Against the theory the following points can be made:

(1) The translation of rp'um as "healers" does not bear close inspection. rp' may not mean, "to heal," there is no evidence for this meaning in the Ugaritic texts.

(2) It cannot be established beyond doubt that the king of Ugarit was connected in any way with the rp'um, nor can the link, if any, between mt. rp'e and rp'um be satisfactorily explained from the present material.

(3) If the rp'um were a sort of "ministry of agriculture," as Gray implies, how could they also be "cultic functionaries?" If they were human, how could they be "divine persons in virtue of their function?" I do not understand Gray's reasoning that the human rp'um became a term for the dead.

(4) In view of the connection of the rp'um with El, Baal and Anat it is much more likely that they were divine and not human.

In his second article[32], Gray takes as his point of departure the passage which has already been quoted in the paragraph on

Ginsberg (I quote Gray's transcription):

m'ed rm krt

btk rp'e 'arṣ

bpḫr qbṣ dtn

"Highly exalted by Krt,

among the dispensers of fertility of the earth

in the assembly of the clan of Dtn."

Though taking cognisance of Ginsberg's translation of rp'e as "community," parallel to qbṣ, Gray wishes to alter the simple parallelism of the verse and take rp'e 'arṣ and qbṣ dtn as two compound phrases standing in parallel. Following from his conclusions in his previous article he translates rp'e 'arṣ as "dispensers of fertility of the earth;" this stands in parallel to "the assembly of the clan of dtn."

It is possible that rp'e is a construct plural, but this is unlikely. Surely the simplest explanation is, here at least, the most satisfactory. The parallelism is as follows btk//bpḫr, rp'e/ /qbṣ, 'arṣ // dtn. For his theory Gray requires a parallelism between rp'e and dtn, but this simply does not exist and the parallelism is as I have indicated. rp'e is parallel to qbṣ, and from the context must mean something like "community" or "congregation." dtn may have been the name of a ruling house, as Gray suggests, or it may equally, as parallel to 'arṣ, mean an area of land such as a kingdom or realm. Thus the translation of "dispensers of fertility of the earth," for rp'e 'arṣ is open to serious objection. Gray's reasoning is rather slack here and there is simply not enough evidence to bolster his arguments. It may be said, finally, that he does not do enough justice to the theory that would make rp'um the shades of the departed.

Caquot has also examined the problem of the rp'um.[33] He regards ʾilnym as a divine epithet applied to the dead.[34] It is Caquot's thesis that in the Ugaritic texts the word rp'um was already applied to the dead. This was the primary meaning of the word and that any capacity which the rp'um had to restore fertility was secondary. His basic question is whether an examination of the texts leads us to suppose that the dead received the name rp'um from a band of "healers/fertilisers" around the king or whether rp'um is an original name for the dead.[35] His point of departure is the following text;

. . . . . šps

rp'em . tḫtk

šps . tḫtk . ʾelnym

ʿdk . ʾelm . hn mtm

ʿdk .

" . . . . . O Shapash,
thou verily keptest company with the shades;
O Shapash, thou verily keptest company with
the ghosts.
Gods were around thee, lo! the dead
were around thee." [36]

Caquot observes that in this text the word rp'um must mean the dead visited by Šps the sun-goddess during the night when she left the world of the living for that of the dead. In another article[37] he notes that in this small text the words rp'um, ʾilnym and mtm, all stand in parallel; that is Rephaim, divine beings and the dead. In this text the dead are in the company of Šps who journeys between the world of the living and the dead. This was a common attribute

of solar deities in the Ancient Near East. Šmš in Mesopotamia was the šar ēṭimme, "the king of the shades" and the bēl mîti, "the lord of the dead."[38] The Egyptian sun-god, Re, also visited the domain of the dead and illumined their land as he passed through the twelve hours of the night in his barque.[39]

However, Caquot also wishes to attribute fertility to the rp'um; yet their fertility is secondary to their designation as the dead. In the second part of his article on the Rephaim he draws attention to the fact that the word "to heal" had a much wider connotation in the Ancient Near East than we are accustomed to give it. It was an aspect of the salvation which the deity accorded to his worshippers, granting renewed life to all nature. Esmun of Sidon and perhaps Melqart of Tyre were deities of this type, possibly local variations of the same divine being whose most ancient manifestation is that of the Ugaritic Baal.[40]

After an examination of the text "Rephaim," Caquot comes to the conclusion that these fragments are connected with the tale of Danel and his son Aqhat. It is Aqhat whom Baal heals and restores to life and there Aqhat is rp'u b'l, "the one whom Baal has healed."[41] The banquet given to the rp'um marks the resurrection of Aqhat. Baal was closely connected with the family of Danel and Aqhat and was, therefore, concerned for their welfare. Caquot explains the connection between Aqhat and Rephaim by saying that when Aqhat is slain Danel summons his dead ancestors, the rp'um, to his palace, where they carry out the ritual of restoring the dead Aqhat to life. They come from the underworld. The threshing-floors, he says, were closely connected with rites of mourning in the Semitic world and this is why they are mentioned here. The dead were responsible for fertility and the continual growth of the crops. But, he asks,

if the dead ancestors protected the fertility and ensured the continued prosperity of the house of Danel, why was Baal there at all? He surmounts this difficulty by remarking that the powers of the rp'um here are the survival of a very ancient belief in the powers of the dead to control fertility and life, but by the time of the Ugaritic texts these powers had become transferred to Baal. The rp'um, "healers" were those honoured dead who protected their posterity. The Old Testament took this name over without realising the implications involved completely.[42]

Caquot's theory is attractive. It does justice to the fact that the rp'um are undoubtedly the dead. But it seems to me that the fragments entitled "Rephaim" are so corrupt and obscure that they cannot give any evidence which will stand up to a close scrutiny. Again there is the objection that nowhere in the Ugaritic texts does rp' mean specifically "to heal." Admittedly the dead were connected with fertility in the Ancient Near East. Nergal, Sumuqan, Tammuz, all rulers of the underworld were also fertility deities. Osiris, the Egyptian judge of the dead caused the Nile to rise and bring fertility to Egypt, His rites in the temple of Abydos were closely connected with the growing grain. But this broken text "Rephaim" does not allow us to conclude that rp'u b'l is Aqhat, or that the rp'um indulge in a resurrection ritual involving the three days of resurrection. Preconceived patterns of Ancient Oriental religions cannot be imposed with impunity on a small and very broken text.

Jirku in an article regards the rp'um in the Ugaritic texts as neither human agents, nor the ghosts of the dead, but as a group of half-mythological beings who indulged in a definite religious cult. They were bound in a kind of religious brotherhood. Rp'u B'l was, without doubt, their leader. Jirku then cites several personal

names e.g. Abdu-rapi (an Akkadian form, "servant of Rp'u"); ʿbdrp'i (the Ugaritic form of the same name); rapā'ēl רָפָאֵל (1 Chron. 26.7 "Rapha is god"): more likely "God heals."[43] All this may be true, but there is not enough evidence to make it any more certain than other theories.

Jacob considers the rp'um to be divine beings and aides of El, being apparently eight in number and having one rp'u bʿl, the champion of Baal and Anat, at their head. He thinks that the association of the word with the dead is secondary at Ugarit and that they were primarily "healers." They have, he asserts, the power to restore fertility. Do they? רָפָא is used in Genesis 20.17 where Abimelech and his concubines have their fertility restored. But this does not prove a similar meaning for the word rpʾ in Ugaritic.[44]

Ginsberg and Driver seem to me to be much closer to the truth of the matter with their explanation of rpʾ. Driver connects the word with the Arabic rifaʾu, "union". רָפָא in Hebrew he takes in the sense of "bound up or joined together."[45] The רְפָאִים are the massed community of the dead, leading a common life in the underworld. In support of this theory one must say that is always found in the plural form in the Old Testament and never in the singular. The root of both the Hebrew רְפָאִים and the Ugaritic rp'um must be sought in the Hebrew רָפָא , "bound up" = Arabic rafa'a, "united." He regards the rp'um as chthonic deities.

The key to the meaning of rp'um in the Ugaritic texts must not be sought in mt . rp'e, which is impossible to translate, nor in rp'u bʿl, the champion of Baal and Anat, nor in the dubious rpʾ, but in the use of the word rp'um itself. Baal descends to the

underworld, having made his submission to Mot. While he languishes there his sister Anat, with the aid of Špš, seeks him out. Shapash, the luminary of the gods, agrees to help to look for Baal during her nightly journey through the underworld. There Shapash eats the filthy bread and drinks the decayed wine of the underworld, surrounded by the shades, rp'um, the chthonic deities, 'ilnym and the dead mtm.[46] All these words are synonyms for the inhabitants of the underworld. Baal then returns to the land of the living where he is restored, amid great joy, to his rightful throne. In Rephaim Tablet II, the shades are summoned by El to his palace. In Tablet III, Baal and Anat, Repu-Baal and Hyly the king are to be honoured. Baal is restored to his throne with a banquet. The possibility suggests itself that the shades have been summoned by El to partake in the joyful restoration of Baal and to enjoy the banquet, before returning to the gloom of the underworld. This is but a possibility and is as vulnerable as some of the other theories owing to the fragmentary nature of the texts. I suggest the following conclusions:

1. The word rp'um did denote the inhabitants of the underworld, the massed company of the dead, in the Ugaritic texts. These being were also called 'ilnym, because supernatural powers were ascribed to the dead in the Ancient Near East. This was the primary meaning of the word rp'um, any association with fertility was secondary. They were not human agents, but the spirits of the deceased, thus hardly "eight" in number.

2. They were connected with Baal, Anat and El. Possibly they associated with Baal in the nether world and were summoned to participate in the celebrations at his restoration to his rightful throne. They were also associated with Danel and Aqhat in a way which remains completely obscure.

3. The rp'um may have been connected with fertility, but again this is difficult to establish and, in any event, this connection would stem from their status as the dead, who were able to procure fertility for the living.

4. It is impossible to substantiate any link between the rp'um with mt rp'e or with rp'u b'l.

5. The text Rephaim I may not belong with Rephaim II and III, but to the legend of Aqhat.

(b) רפאים in Phoenician.

When we turn to the Phoenician funerary inscriptions we find the word רפאים used solely as a designation for the dead, the assembly of the departed.

The inscription on the sarcophagus of Tabnith, the king of Sidon, pronounced a curse on those who would open his tomb or disturb his peace. The relevant part of the sarcophagus inscription for our purpose reads:

6. ואם פת
7. ת תפתח עלתי ורגז תרגזן אל ידכן לקח זרע בחים
תחת שמ
8. ש ומשכב את רפאי

"(6) and if (7) you dare to open me and disturb me, you will have no posterity among the living under the sun and no resting-place (for yourself) among the dead."

The sarcophagus dates from the end of the 6th century B.C. and was discovered in 1887 in a necropolis near Sidon. It was an Egyptian anthropoid sarcophagus, which had previously belonged to an Egyptian general named Penptah. Tabnith, who took great care

to secure his own tomb, was not over-scrupulous about disturbing the resting-place of another body.[47]

The second inscription comes from a sarcophagus similar to that of Tabnith, belonging to Esmunazar (Eshmun helps). It dates from around the beginning of the 5th century B.C. and was also discovered in the Sidonian necropolis.

כי כל ממלכת ו 6,
כל אדם אש יפתח עלת משכב זאת אש ישא את 7.
עלת משכבי את אש יעמסן בם
שכב ואל יכן לם משכב את רפאם ואל יקבר 8.
ואל יכן לם בן וזרע
ותחת 9.

"(6) For every king and (7) every man who opens this tomb or who steals (lit. "lifts up") this sarcophagus where I rest or who carries me away from (8) this tomb; for such men there shall be no resting-place with the shades and they will not be buried in a grave and there will be neither son nor posterity (9) to succeed them."[48]

A similar meaning for the word רפאם is found in a Neo-Punic inscription from the 1st century A.D., from El-Amruni, discovered in a mausoleum:

1. לרפ[אם] אורפאם ש עפולאי
2. מעכ[שמ]א ריזעי

(1) To the divine shades of Apuleius (2) Maximus Rideus ..."
The text is bilingual and though the first two lines of the Latin inscription are much damaged, they may be restored as follows:-

(1) D(is) M(anibus) SAC(rum)

(2) Q(uintus) APULEUS MAXSSIMUS

(1) To the sacred shades,

(2) [of] Quintus Apuleus Maximus ...

(The grammar of the Latin inscription and its orthography leave much to be desired).

The א of אזראפא may be the Punic form of the article, but the following restoration is also possible, [ה]אזראפא The translation remains, however, the same.

It is of interest to note the parallel אזראפא / עלם in the light of the Ugaritic parallel, rp'um / 'ilnym. This is a further indication that the Ugaritic rp'um were primarily the inhabitants of the underworld. There is, however, no doubt at all that, in the two Phoenician inscriptions and the one Neo-Punic inscription, מאסף / אזראפא meant the assembly of the dead in the nether world. There are no fertility connotations here. From the two Phoenician inscriptions it may be deduced that the common Ancient Near Eastern wish that the bones of a man might lie undisturbed, that his shade might repose in the underworld, existed in Phoenicia.

Rephaim in the Old Testament

The word רפא'ים applies, in the Old Testament, to two sets of people.

(i) The company of the dead

There are various verses in several books of the Old Testament where the word can mean nothing other than those who dwell in Sheol, the underworld.

Job 26.5

הרפאים יחוללו מתחת מים ושכניהם

"Before him the shades are made to tremble, beneath the waters and their inhabitants."

The world of the dead was considered to lie in the depths of the world ocean, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Suffice to say here the picture is of the dead trembling before God in their realm far down in the depths of the sea beneath the world of the fish and the great sea-creatures. On the basis of נֶגְדּוֹ, "before him," in 6a, I wish to insert מִפָּנָיו, "before him" in 5a to secure a better parallelism with the following verse which states that "before God" Sheol and Abaddon are naked. The שכניהם are the fish, sea-creatures and monsters which swim in the ocean, separating the land of the living from that of the dead.

Ps. 88.11

הלמתים תעשה־פלא אם־רפאים יקומון יודוך

"Do you work a wonder for the dead? Do the company of the dead rise up and praise you?"

רפאים stands in parallel to מתים. The company of the dead are cut off from Yahweh. Verses 12 and 13 of the Psalm go on to say that the grace and faithfulness of Yahweh and his power are not known in the land of the dead, which is a place of darkness and forgetfulness.

Proverbs 2.18

כי שחה אל־מות ביתה ואל־רפאים מעגלתיה

"For her house inclines towards death and her paths to the company of the dead."

Again there can be no doubt that the רפאים are the inhabitants of the land of the dead. My supervisor suggests that verse 18a alludes to the god Mot, whose gaping throat swallows the dead. I have shown elsewhere that certain passages in the Old Testament refer unmistakably to this Canaanite deity,[51] but this is not one of them. "Death" here means the underworld, the land of the dead, there is no personification intended. This verse corresponds to 9.18 where the man who enters the house of the אשה זרה ʾissā zārā enters the "depths of Sheol" and joins the company of the dead.

Proverbs 9.18

ולא־ידע כי־רפאים שם בעמקי שאול קראיה

"And he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol."

The house of this foreign woman is, according to the wisdom teacher, the place of the dead.

Proverbs 21.16

אדם תועה מדרך השכל בקהל רפאים ינוח

"The man who wanders from the way of understanding shall rest in the assembly of the dead."

The man who has not followed the teaching of the wise will end up in the assembly of the departed. In this verse the use of the word קהל brings out the idea of "the massed company of the dead," proposed by Driver.

Isaiah 26.14a

מתים בל־יחיו רפאים בל יקמו

"The dead do not regain life, the company of the dead do not rise (i.e. from the underworld)."

[for רפאים see also 14.9 in Ch. 2]

Is. 26.19

יחיו מתיך נבלתי יקומון הקיצו ורננו
שכני עפר כי טל אורות טלך וארץ רפאים תפיל

"Your dead will live and my (poss. your) body(ies) will rise. Awake and sing, dwellers in the dust, for your dew is a dew of light and you will let (it) fall on the land of the shades."

Apart from the obvious textual and theological problems of the verse, which need not concern us, it is enough to note that the verse testifies to the meaning of "inhabitants of the underworld" for רפאים .

רפאים in the above verse has the same meaning as רפאם in the Phoenician inscriptions and rp'um in the Ugaritic texts, i.e. the inhabitants of the land of the dead.

(ii) Prehistoric inhabitants of Canaan

There are several passages in the Old Testament which show the word רפאים in quite another sense from that discussed in (i) above. It designates a race of beings who were former, or prehistoric, inhabitants of the land of Canaan. AV translated the word in this context as "giants," while LXX and Vulgate certainly took this meaning when they translated רפאים as γίγαντες , τιτᾶνες and gigantes, respectively.

Genesis 14 tells the rather cryptic and confused story of the battle of the kings, the chief protagonist in which was Chedorlaomer of Elam. In verse 5 we read,

ובארבע עשרה שנה בא כדרלעמר והמלכים אשר אתו
ויכו את־רפאים בעשתרות קרנים ואת־הזוזים בהם
ואת־האימים בשוה קריתים

"And in the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and smote the Rephaim in Ashtaroth-Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaweh-Kiriathaim."

(Insert ה before רפאים following LXX τοὺς γίγαντας)

In this verse the Rephaim are listed with a group of races who appear as pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Genesis 15.20

(את־החתי ואת־הפרזי ואת־הרפאים)

"The Hittite, the Perizzite and the Rephaim."

This verse comes from 15.19-21 in which God promises the land of Canaan to Abram and lists the inhabitants of the land, a list which is repeated in other places. הרפאים appear with historical peoples, the Hittites, the Perizzites (v. 20), the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Jebusites (v. 21). It is to be observed that הרפאים does not have the usual gentilic ending י. Also it is a plural word while the rest are in the singular, the one representing the nation, but it does, like the remainder, have the article.

Deut. 2.10,11

האמים לפנים ישבו בה עם גדול ורב ורם
כענקים (11) רפאים ידמו אף־הם כענקים
והמאבים יקראו להם אמים

"The Emim lived there before, a great and many and tall people, like the Anakim (11) and they were reckoned Rephaim like the Anakim; but the Moabites call them Emim."

This verse is almost impossible to interpret, for we do not know who the Anakim were. The Emim and the Anakim were one and the same and they were also considered Rephaim. Apparently the Moabites were

able to distinguish between the Emim and the Anakim.

Deut 3.11

כי רק־עוג מלך הבשן נשאר מיתר הרפאים

"For only Og, the king of Bashan was left of the remainder of the Rephaim."

Here we note that the Rephaim were reckoned, at least, as being a people who apparently died out, or were exterminated in some mysterious way. In Joshua 12.4 Og the king of Bashan, one of the remnant of the Rephaim is mentioned as dwelling at Ashtaroth. This links up with Gen. 14.5 where Chedorlaomer and the kings with him smite the Rephaim at Ashtaroth-Karnaim. Joshua 13.12 again insists that Og was the last of the Rephaim. Joshua 15.8 mentions a valley of Rephaim, עמק־רפאים , to the west of the valley of Hinnom near the Jebusite city of Jerusalem.

There is probably an element of myth and fantasy in these sources which cannot be considered as historical notes. The word רפאים designated a strange, mysterious people, part of a forgotten fantasy world, already old in the time of the Canaanites and the Hittites, who had lived in Canaan in the far past. This usage of רפאים is peculiar to the Old Testament, for we do not find it elsewhere. If the Ugaritic term mt . rp'e, as applied to Danel is a gentilic term, the "Rephaite," then some connection might be postulated between it and the Rephaim in the verses just quoted. But, as has been observed, the term in Ugaritic cannot be evaluated or translated with any degree of certainty. Thus the second use of רפאים in the Old Testament is gentilic.

Necromancy and Spirits of the Dead in the Old Testament

Was there any connection, in the Old Testament, between the living and those who dwelt in the realm of death, did they have any relationship with one another? Necromancy and trafficking with the deceased were a major part of the stock in trade of most Ancient Near Eastern religions.

The Egyptians believed strongly that the dead still had the power to influence the living. Rameses III delivered the opening speech at the trial of certain officials, while already in the land of the dead. The said officials had plotted to end Rameses' reign. The king asserted,

> "As for me, I am protected and defended for ever and ever,
> for I am among the vindicated kings who stand before
> Amun-Re, king of the gods, and Osiris master of eternity."[52]

The living in Egypt consulted the superior powers of the dead.

There existed a widespread and apparently a very ancient belief among the Babylonians and Assyrians that certain human beings were possessed of demonic powers and could use them over whom they pleased.[53] The dead were believed to have the power to aid the living by answering questions about the future.[54] The dead were dependent on the tomb-offerings and the libations which the living provided for them, in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan alike. The spirits of the dead could be summoned by mediums and conjurers, as Gilgamesh asked for the spirit of Enkidu to be summoned by Nergal, ruler of the underworld:

> "Forthwith he opened a hole in the earth,
> the spirit of Enkidu, like a wind-puff,
> issued forth from the nether world."[55]

In the Old Testament also, there are traces of a, perhaps popular, belief in the efficacy of the spirits of the dead as foretellers of the future and guides for those still in the land of the living. Although necromancy is roundly condemned in the Old Testament, this does not alter the fact that this integral part of life in the Ancient Near East did also attempt, with some success, to establish itself in Israel at various periods in her history.

The <u>locus classicus</u> for any examination of the practice of necromancy in the Old Testament is the account of the visit of king Saul to the witch at Endor (1 Samuel 28.6-25). It is one of the supreme tragedies of the Old Testament that Saul, who had removed the "mediums" and the "wizards" from the land, should be forced, as a broken fugitive, to seek the aid of one whose cult he had repudiated in his best days, when Yahweh was still with him and the prophet Samuel his friend. He had disobeyed Samuel while he lived and now he sought comfort and guidance from his dead spirit; the God of the living had refused to speak through the normal oracular channels, so Saul must, perforce, turn to the denizens of the land of the dead and their mediums.

28.3

וַיָּמָת שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּסְפְּדוּ־לוֹ כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְבְּרֻהוּ בָּרָמָה
וּבְעִירוֹ וְשָׁאוּל הֵסִיר הָאֹבוֹת וְאֶת־הַיִּדְּעֹנִי מִן־הָאָרֶץ

"And Samuel died and all Israel mourned him and they buried him in Ramah, in his city and Saul turned out the mediums and the conjurers from the land."

28.6

וַיִּשְׁאַל שָׁאוּל בַּיהוָה וְלֹא עָנָהוּ גַם בַּחֲלֹמוֹת
גַם בָּאוּרִים גַם בַּנְּבִיאִם

"And Saul inquired of Yahweh, but Yahweh did not answer him either in dreams, or by Urim, or through the prophets."

In this verse שאל is used in the sense of making enquiry by divination. Normal methods failing him, Saul turned to those whom he had outlawed. He requested that his servants seek out a medium, a woman who deals with the world of the dead. His servants replied by informing the king that there was a "medium" at Endor, a village which lay on the north side of little Hermon.

28.7.

ויאמר שאול לעבדיו בקשו-לי אשת בעלת-אוב
ואלכה אליה ואדרשה-בה ויאמרו עבדיו אליו
הנה אשת בעלת-אוב בעין דור

"And Saul said to his courtiers, 'Find me a woman who controls a departed spirit and I will go to her and enquire of her.' And his courtiers said to him, 'There is a woman who controls a spirit at En-dor'."

It is to be observed that the ability of Saul's courtiers to name someone right away, shows how the subject of necromancy, though forbidden by law, was an open secret in court circles. It has been represented to me that this is an incorrect assumption, for the servants are asked to get information (בקשו-לי) and therefore it must be assumed that they only reply after some time has elapsed, when they have made their enquiries. I see no reason for this. They are not asked to obtain information about necromancy and its practitioners. Saul says, "Find me a medium." Further the suggestion that necromancy was a persistent popular practice and not a courtly preoccupation does not seem to me to bear close scrutiny.

It was not unknown either before or after Saul's period for the leading men in the community of Israel to have recourse either to foreign gods or outlawed native deities. There must have been those in the royal court who "dabbled" in the forbidden arts of necromancy.

בַּעֲלַת־אוֹב , lit. "mistress of an ʾōb." The ʾōb, as we shall observe, was in its original meaning a spirit summoned from the world of the dead.

In verse 8 we read how Saul disguised himself and went by night to visit the medium and requested of her;

קסמי־נא לי באוב והעלי לי את אשר־אמר אליך

"Divine for me by means of a spirit and bring up for me (i.e. from the underworld) whoever I shall name to you."

The אוב in this verse is not in any sense a "familiar" spirit, but the specific spirit requested by the client. Saul asked the woman to call up a spirit and qualified this request by demanding that the medium summon up the spirit which he named.

The woman then accused her nocturnal visitor of forcing her to break the law:

9 הנה אתה ידעת את אשר־עשה שאול אשר
הכרית את־האבות ואת הידעני מן־הארץ

"Do you not know what Saul has done, that he has cut off the mediums and the conjurers from the land."

LXX γνώστας endeavours to even up the Hebrew text which has a plural אבות and a singular ידעני . Thus it is probably best to follow the Greek and alter ידעני to ידענים .

The usage of אבות and ידעני ם must be explained. In verse 8 the woman is asked to divine by means of an אוב "spirit." In this verse we learn that Saul cut off (הכרית) the אבות from the land. Now it did not lie within Saul's compass to banish "spirits" from his kingdom. Thus it may be that אבות is a shorthand form of בעלות-א', "mediums," human agents whom Saul could drive from his land.

The masculine plural (see emendation) ידעני ם , lit. "the knowing ones," may denote the masculine equivalent of אבות. The word could also denote spirits, but again, in this verse, the word must designate practitioners of the black arts, and so I translate "conjurers."

Saul then assured the woman that no punishment would fall on her, for she regarded her visitors as <u>agents provocateurs</u>. In verse 11 the woman was asked by Saul to bring up Samuel. At once the woman recognised the king. The woman, again assured of her safety, proceeded with her task and announced:

13. אלהי ם ראיתי עלי ם מן-הארץ

"I see a spirit coming up from the underworld."

אלהי ם is a spirit, not a "god" as <u>RSV</u> and <u>AV</u> translate. The use of אלהי ם ascribes a kind of divine status to the dead, or to this particular dead man. Samuel is now one of the company of the dead, and thus is given divine status in view of his supernatural condition. There are only two occasions on which אלהי ם is used in this way in the Old Testament, here and in Isaiah 8.19. ארץ signifies the underworld; indeed

it can hardly mean anything else in the context, for it was from the underworld that the spirits of the dead issued, when they were summoned by mediums and conjurers to the land of the living.

The king then asked the woman what the spirit was like, for it would seem that only the woman was able to see the raised spectre. She did not recognise the figure but described its appearance to the king:

14.

אישׁ זקן עלה והוא עטה מעיל וידע שאול
כי - שמואל הוא

"An old man ascends and he is wrapped in a (long) robe. Then Saul knew that he was Samuel."

The spectre is an old man in a long robe. Long robes were a sign of status in the Ancient Near East and Samuel must have had a special one. Saul seems to recognise, from the description offered by the woman, that the figure is indeed Samuel. He had at one time torn the very robe of Samuel (1 Samuel 15.27). However, as Gilgamesh recognised Enkidu, so Saul knew that the ghost was Samuel. The spirit of Samuel then asked the king why his rest had been disturbed:

15.

ויאמר שמואל אל-שאול למה הרגזתני להעלות אתי

"And Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me to bring me up?' (i.e. from the underworld)."

רגז is used of disturbing a tomb and its contents, and thus the rest of the deceased, in the inscriptions on the sarcophagi of both Tabnith and Esmunazar of Sidon as was noted above. עלה is used

of the ascending spirit in the same way as the Akkadian cognate ilâ is used of various spirits and gods "coming up" from the underworld.

Saul proceeded to explain his difficulties to Samuel who refused point blank to render the aid which he had withheld from Saul in life. He then returned to the underworld leaving a terrified Saul prostrate upon the ground. The account closes with the very humanitarian action of the woman in persuading the king to eat and then rest.

This passage must represent what was a relatively familiar occurrence in the world of the Ancient Near East, even to the vocabulary used. Of course, the action of Saul is utterly condemned by the writer or writers of the book of Samuel and the story is no doubt told to emphasise the black depths of depravity and superstition into which the hapless Saul had sunk. The so-called "witch of En-dor" is, nonetheless, represented as a very credible figure, fearful of the edict against her kind, but in the end taking pity on the broken and desperate man who had been her king. The whole section is an indication of a persistent belief that the inhabitants of the underworld could be summoned to rise and converse with the living. It also displays the belief that the dead have a power to intervene efficaciously in the affairs of the living.

Leviticus 19.31 contains a prohibition against necromancy:

אל תפנו אל-ה אבת ואל-הידעני ל אל-תבקשו
לטמאה בהם אני יהוה אלהיכם

"Do not turn to (the) spirits of the dead or (the) familiar spirits, do not aim to be polluted by them. I am Yahweh your God."

Snaith, in his commentary, points out that the religious leaders in Israel evidently had the greatest difficulty in abolishing the

cult of the dead among the people.[56] The warning against necromancy in repeated twice in the succeeding chapter. Snaith regards אוב as a ghost which speaks out of the ground and ידעני as a "knowing one," one who has a secret knowledge of hidden things.[57]

Unlike 1 Samuel 28.3,9 where the words refer to the mediums and conjurers themselves, the words in this verse refer to the spirits. Yahweh warns any man or woman who might be tempted ~~to be~~ to become a practitioner of the black arts, that they run the risk of rendering themselves unclean. The only supernatural being with whom they have to do is Yahweh himself. Necromancy meant pollution. The words here, thus, represent the spirits summoned from the infernal regions.

Leviticus 20.6 warns that if a person dabbles in the arts of necromancy he or she will be cut off automatically from the community of Israel:

והנפש אשר תפנה אל-האבת ואל-הידענים לזנת
אחריהם ונתתי את-פני בנפש ההוא והכרתי אתו
מקרב עמו

> "If any person turns to the spirits of the dead or the familiar spirits to apostasise after them, I will turn against that person and cut him off from the midst of his people."

Again this verse prohibits the practice of necromancy in the severest terms. The meaning of אוב and ידעני is clear. The person who will be cut off is the necromancer, the one who turns to ghosts and familiar spirits and defiles himself with their cult. Upon such people Yahweh will have no mercy.

20.27 of the same book sets the penalty for necromancy as death by stoning.

ואיש או־אשה כי יהיה בהם אוב או ידעני
מות יומתו באבן ירגמו אתם דמיהם בם

"Any man or woman who controls a spirit of the dead or a familiar spirit shall certainly die. They (the community) shall stone them, their blood shall be upon their own heads."

In this verse both אוב and ידעני are in the singular and are the spirits which can be invoked by the man or woman who is an exponent of the black art of necromancy. This practice is regarded as utterly vile and death by stoning is demanded as a penalty. Basically the crime is one of lack of trust in the living Yahweh coupled with the abhorrence felt in the face of the dead who were cut off from the living and the lord of all life.

The legislation against witchcraft is continued in the book of Deuteronomy. In 18.10,11 necromancy is prohibited. These verses are part of a long list of prohibited actions such as sacrifice of children, augury, soothsaying and enchanting, then we find:

ושאל אוב וידעני ודרש אל־המתים

"One who consults spirits of the dead and familiar spirits and one who inquires of the dead."

שאל is used in connection with these necromantic practices. It denotes the partnership between the medium and the particular spirit at their beck and call.

"One who enquires of the dead," is an indisputable reference to the summoning of the dead for oracular purposes. This belief in the foreknowledge of the dead is not repudiated as such, but is condemned as a practice not compatible with the true follower of Yahweh.

S.R. Driver indicates that אוב and ידעני are always in parallel and mentioned together. This is not strictly true, as they do not appear together in 1 Samuel 28.7, or in Is. 29.4 where אוב is mentioned alone. He says that an אוב was considered to declare itself in the body of the person who had to do with it, and proffers the idea that ventriloquism was used by mediums. We have no direct evidence of this practice, apart from the word which is used by LXX for אוב , ἐγγαστρίμυθος , "ventriloquist," ἐν γαστρὶ μυθος lit. "speech in the belly." ידעני was a familiar spirit at the beck and call of the practitioner.[58] The distinction between the אוב and the ידעני may thus be maintained. Those who divine by the אוב profess to bring up any ghost, those who divine by the ידעני call up that particular spirit who is their familiar.

2 Kings 21,6 is part of a condemnation of the idolatrous innovations or restorations of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah.

והעביר את־בנו באש ועונן ונחש ועשה אוב
וידעני ו הרבה לעשות הרע בעיני יהוה
להכעיסו [ן]

"And he (Manasseh) made his son pass through the fire and practised soothsaying and augury and he dabbled with the spirits of the dead and the familiar spirits, doing evil in Yahweh's eyes, to anger him."

Following BH להכעיסו is best read, i.e. to anger <u>him</u>. Montgomery and Gehman regard the אוב as a ghost of the dead, but then proceed to translate ידעני ו as "wizards." It does not seem possible to me to disengage the sense of ידעני

from that of אוב , for both represent members of the spirit world. One can scarcely be supernatural while the other is merely human.[59]

Gray, on the other hand, thinks that אוב may possibly be derived from the Arabic ʾāba(w) "to return," meaning basically, one who returns from the dead, as Samuel appeared to Saul at Endor. ידעני, he regards as those who profess to have familiar spirits, or the familiar spirits themselves. In the original usage the terms probably referred to the ghosts and spirits, and secondarily to those who were their mediums.[60] With this latter statement I am in agreement. However, the derivation of אוב from the Arabic ʾāba(w) is rather dubious and casts no real light on the meaning of the word.

Perhaps the singular ידעני is to be read following the parallel passage in 2 Chron. 33.6, and as אוב itself is in the singular, it would seem the better reading. But the sense in both cases is collective.

עשה אוב וידעני , is a peculiar phrase, lit. "he did the spirits of the dead and the familiar spirits." עשה must be taken in the sense of "having recourse to" or "dabbling in," otherwise no sense can be made of the phrase. Manasseh, presumably, indulged in those aspects of paganism most hated by the Yahwist party, child-sacrifice, soothsaying and augury and consultation of the dead through the agency of necromancers and conjurers.

2 Kings 23.24 is from a section praising Josiah, the reforming monarch for doing what was right in the eyes of Yahweh,

וגם את־האבות ואת־הידעני ואת־התרפים ואת־הגלולים
ואת־כל־השקצים אשר נראו בארץ יהודה ובירושלם בער
יאשיהו למען הקים את־דברי התורה הכתבים על־הספר
אשר מצא חלקיהו הכהן בית יהוה

"And Josiah exterminated (lit. "burned") the mediums and the conjurers, the household deities and idols, all the loathsome objects which were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law written in the book, which Hilkiah the priest had found in the temple of Yahweh."

In this verse it is most probable that the words אבות and ידעני refer, not to the spirits, which Josiah could hardly have burned, but to their manipulators, the mediums and the conjurers. It would seem therefore that the appellations of the spirits could also refer to the practitioners of the art of necromancy.

Isaiah 8.19 does give a somewhat clearer indication of the meaning as they are used more precisely:

וכי יאמרו אליכם דרשו אל-האבות ואל-הידעני
המצפצפים והמהגים הלוא-עם אל-אלהיו ידרש
בעד החיים אל המתים

19/ "And/men will say to you, "Consult the spirits of the dead and the familiar spirits who chirp and gibber (NEB); should not a nation consult its departed spirits, the dead on behalf of the living?"

The interpretation offered in NEB and JB of this verse differs totally from the traditional one as exemplified in AV and RSV both of which treat the second half of the verse as a rhetorical question of Isaiah's "Should not a people consult its God?" But the new translation harmonises much more smoothly with verse 20 in respect of the grammar. The two verses say that men will tell the disciples of Isaiah to seek to the dead for an oracle and message, this, says v. 20, is what they will say. אלהיו is translated as "gods" by both JB and NEB.

This is completely unsatisfactory in the context which deals rather with the inhabitants of the underworld. According to 1 Samuel 28.13, the shade of Samuel is called an אלהים , "departed spirit" (hardly "god"!). It would seem logical to translate אלהי , which, after all, is parallel to מתי , as "its departed spirits," i.e. the dead of Israel. The idea would appear to be that Isaiah's opponents say that it would be much better for all to have recourse to the help of those ancestors now in the underworld who have secret knowledge of the future.

In verse 18 Isaiah claims that he and his sons are the signs and portents which Yahweh has sent. In this verse (19) he indicates that certain men will ask the people to turn to superstitious practices because they find it difficult to grasp their faith. The meaning of אבות and ידעני is clear, they are the spirits of the dead and the familiar spirits. But the two words מצפצפים and מהגים may refer either to the murmurings and gibberings of the conjured spirits or to the methods which the sorcerers used to deceive their clients, this pointing to the LXX:

καὶ ἐὰν εἴπωσι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ζητήσατε τοὺς
ἐγγαστριμύθους καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς φωνοῦντας
τοὺς κενολογοῦντας, οἱ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας φωνοῦσιν

> "And if they say to you, 'Seek to the possessors of divining spirits (lit. "ventriloquists") and to those who speak from the earth, those who speak vanity, those who speak out of the belly.'"

Incidentally LXX does support the traditional interpretation of the second half of the verse:

οὐκ ἔθνος πρὸς Θεὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκζητήσουσι

"Should not a nation seek to its God?"

It may be, of course, that LXX was trying to make sense of the difficult Hebrew grammar of MT or whatever text they had. LXX does seem to suggest the practitioners rather than the spirits, ἐγγαστρι μύθος can, in classical Greek, be applied to the methods of a diviner but also to the familiar spirit.[61] LXX is also more explicit than MT with τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς φωνοῦντας "those speaking out of the earth," a direct reference to spirits speaking from the underworld.

In the Hebrew text the key to the meaning of אבות and ידעני may be found in the phrase בעד החיים אל־המתים "consulting the dead on behalf of the living." This makes it clear that the verse is about necromancy. It is highly likely that the words in question refer to the spirits and not the the exponents of the evil art of conjuration.

Isaiah 19 is an oracle against Egypt. Yahweh will cause the idols of Egypt to tremble and bring confusion to the Egyptians forcing them to engage in civil war. In their desperation, says Isaiah, they will turn to idols and sorcerers:

3. ונבקה רוח מצרים בקרבו ועצתו אבלע ודרשו
אל־האלילים ואל־האטים ואל־האבות ואל־הידעני

"The spirit of Egypt within her will be poured out and I will confound (lit. "devour") her plan. Then they (the Egyptians) will consult the idols, the sorcerers, the spirits of the dead and the familiar spirits."

ותבקה רוח מצרים בקרבו means that the country will lose its wits and become devoid of reason.[62] In their perplexity the Egyptians will turn to idols and sorcerers. It could be argued that, as האשים , refers to the human exponents of magic arts, the אבות and ידעונים might refer to the mediums and conjurers. But I see no good reason to suppose that אבות and ידעונים should mean anything other than the ghosts and familiar spirits.

Isaiah 29.1-4 is an oracle against Jerusalem, the heroic city, אריאל . Yahweh will bring confusion on her and throw her into such distress that her brave voice will be reduced to that of a ghost's whispering in the underworld, v.4

ושפלת מארץ תדברי ומעפר תשח אמרתך
והיה כאוב מארץ קולך ומעפר אמרתך תצפצף

"You shall be brought low, you shall speak from the underworld and your voice shall issue from low in the dust; your voice shall be like (that of) a ghost from the underworld and your speech shall murmur from the dust."

The Akkadian šaplîs means "below," and is used, for example, in the phrase ersitu šaplītu, "the land below," the underworld.[63] שפל is used in this verse in the sense of Jerusalem being brought so low that it is as if the city were in the underworld.

אוב , here without ידעני , means a ghost or spirit murmuring in the underworld.

An attempt must now be made to draw some conclusions from the material gathered on the two words.

A. אוב

BDB says that, in the majority of cases, the word means a "necromancer" except in Isaiah 29.4, where it means a "ghost."[64] K-B, on the other hand, concludes that the word meant, most probably, a returning spirit of the dead.[65] An אוב may be,

1. Consulted, Levit. 19.31; 20.6; Deut. 18.11; 1 Chron. 10.13; Is. 8.18; 19.3.
2. In the possession of a man or woman, 1 Sam. 28.7; Levit. 20.27.
3. Exterminated, 1 Sam. 28.3,9; 2 Kings 23.24.
4. Under royal patronage, 2 Kings 21.6.
5. Heard speaking from the underworld, Is. 29.4.

It has been shown, thus, that אוב may mean either,

(a) A spirit of the dead which is summoned by a medium or conjurer from the underworld for the purposes of consultation as in 1, 2, 4 and 5 above.

(b) The medium who summons the spirit as in 3 above. This is a secondary meaning and אוב used in this way may best be explained as a shorthand term for בעל(ת)-אוב .

B. ידעני

BDB suggests a "familiar spirit" someone who is acquainted with the underworld.[66] BDB is not at all clear in explaining the way in which ידעני is "familiar." K-B thinks that the word is a familiar spirit or a soothsayer.[67] I am not at all sure that I understand this use of "soothsayer."

The key to the meaning of the word lies, surely, in the root "know". The word ידעני , in that case, means "one who knows"; i.e. a spirit who knows the secrets of the underworld and

of the future. This spirit is the "familiar" of the conjurer, the special spirit which acts as his go-between, journeying from the world of life to the world of death and vice versa. As the word is always parallel to אוב and never stands alone I have translated it as "familiar spirit," where I have rendered אוב as "spirit of the dead," and as "conjurer," where I have rendered אוב as "medium."

Some scholars have various suggestions to make concerning the word אוב, and it would be unfair not to review their ideas briefly, but the above conclusions will remain unaltered.

Hoffner, in an article, discusses some second millenium antecedents to the Hebrew 'ōb and attempts to throw some light on its meaning.[68] The Hittites had, so it seems from Hoffner, a ritual pit which served as a means of presenting sacrifices to the chthonic deities. He lists a group of possible words for such a pit which may be derived from the same ultimate source:

Sumerian, ab(la 1), [I am not at all sure how the word can appear in Semitic and non-Semitic languages, unless (1) the Sumerian word is original and the word is a loan-word in the Semitic languages and Hittite or (2) the word is Semitic in origin and went from there into Sumerian and Hittite, this is possible as there appears to be a Semitic substratum in Sumerian. Hoffner, however, does not explain the connection closely and he is not very specific about any of the languages apart from Hittite.]

Hittite, a-a-bi

Assyrian, abu

Ugaritic, 'eb and Hebrew, 'ōb.[69]

He finds support for his theory that ʾōb originally meant a ritual pit from which the dead were raised for the purposes of consultation in a Ugaritic text:

hklh . ngb . skn . ʾelʾebh . bqds

"his palace, one who shall set up a monument to his ancestors(?) in the sanctuary."

This is a line taken from a passage in the legend of Aqhat in which Danel complains that he has no son to carry out certain necessary filial duties.[70] Hoffner suggests that ʾelʾeb means, "spirit of the pit," the pit being the ritual pit used to invoke the spirits of the dead. He regards אוב in 1 Samuel 28.13 as a parallel to the Ugaritic ʾil/ʾel. Gordon takes ʾilib as one word and regards skn . ʾilib as an ancestral stele.[71] Driver regards ʾelʾeb as a deified ancestral spirit, composed of ʾel (god) and ʾab (father).[72] There is not a shred of evidence to prove that ʾeb means "pit," in Ugaritic. "Stele of his ancestral spirit," is a much more satisfactory translation than "monument to the spirit of the pit." He further says that as Samuel in 1 Samuel 28.13 is described as an אוב this must mean that he is a spirit coming up out of the ritual pit, the ʾōb.[73] ʾōb does not even occur in that verse! The word means a spirit as I have indicated above.

Of his amalgam of terms resembling ʾōb he says, "it is better to consider all of these terms as ursprachliche Residuum of an old substratum language or regard the Hittite ay(a)bi as a prototype."[74] His reasoning here is lamentably obscure, for he seems unable to explain any of the terms accurately. Certainly his translations of several Hittite texts seem to point to the use of a pit of some sort for sacrificing to the gods of the underworld. However, I cannot judge the accuracy of his translation. Further he notes the Greek

βόθρος , "pit" in connection with the sacrifice of Odysseus to the shades. Odysseus wished to raise the shade of the seer Teiresias and sought the advice of the sorceress Circe who said,

> "Run before the North Wind until you come to Ocean Stream and the Grove of Persephone, remarkable for its black poplars and aged willows. At the point where the rivers Phlegethon and Cocytus flow into the Acheron, dig a trench, and sacrifice a young ram and a black ewe which I myself will provide - to Hades and Persephone. Let the blood enter the trench, and as you wait for Teiresias to arrive drive off all others with your sword."[75]

But all this has not the remotest connection with אוב in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there is no talk of blood, sacrifice and the digging of ritual pits. Finally Hoffner infers that בעלת-אוב in 1 Samuel 28.7 implies that the woman at En-dor was possessed of a ritual pit. He thinks too, that Isaiah 29.4 implies the use of such a pit, by its description of ghosts murmuring from the underworld. He concludes by saying that the original meaning of אוב was probably a ritual pit, later the word came to designate the spirits themselves who came out of the pit.

His theory is ingenious, but as far as the Hebrew אוב is concerned, quite insupportable. בעלת-אוב in 1 Samuel 28.7 is a woman who can control a spirit a "medium." In 28.13 the אלהים rises from the underworld מן-האדמה not from the אוב , if that were a ritual pit as Hoffner would have it. There is not the slightest evidence that אוב has anything to do with a ritual pit in the Old Testament. His Hittite and Greek

evidence is, no doubt, accurate, but throws no light on the word in the Old Testament. His Ugaritic evidence is open to serious question and his Sumerian and Assyrian material flimsy, to say the least. If אוב must be linked to anything outside the Old Testament, it resembles, though in meaning only, the Akkadian ețimmu, the ghost of the departed. But אוב may be easily explained from the Old Testament itself, as has been done.

Albright also deals with this word.[76] He notes, first of all, an Ugaritic list of divinities, which commences with one ʾEl [ē] b, which is translated on a corresponding Akkadian list as "the god of the father." This divinity, asserts Albright, was the patron deity of ancestor worship. He translates ʾelēbh in Aqhat as "his ancestral spirits," agreeing with Driver. Like Gray he thinks that the basic meaning of אוב was like that of the French revenant, "ghost, apparition," related to the Arabic ʾāba, "return."[77] This is certainly a more plausible explanation than Hoffner's, but again the word's meaning is perfectly clear from the Old Testament.

Albright then attempts to find the masculine plural of ʾelēb in Isaiah 14.9.[78] Instead of MT אֲבָנֵי־בוֹר - אֶל , "to the stones of the pit," he wants to read ʾel ʾĕbē bōr, "O ghosts of the nether world." However, the vowel of his first syllable ʾĕbē, which he makes short, would have to be long ē to correspond to אוב ; further, even given this, there is no attestation in the Old Testament of ē instead of ô. His theory involves altering a perfectly comprehensible MT to agree with his idea that the Canaanite ʾelēb appears in the Old Testament. He gives no explanation as to how the ן of אבנו has arisen. Moreover, the plural form of אוב which appears consistently throughout the Old Testament

is אבות , a feminine not a masculine plural, though the *ʾăbē of Albright would seem to be a masculine plural construct.

Nor, in my opinion, is there any necessity to alter אוב מֵאֶרֶץ "a spirit from the underworld." in Isaiah 29.4 to ʾōb-m-ʾeres, "ghost of the underworld." The m Albright explains as an enclitic m, an archaic construction found in Ugaritic and in Old Testament poetry. But the point of the verse is that Jerusalem will sink so low that it will be as if she were in the underworld and thus her voice would sound like that of a ghost speaking מארץ , "from (deep) in the underworld." The spirit has not come to the upper world, as Albright would have it. Jerusalem has sunk to the underworld and speaks like a ghost down there.[79]

He has also tried to find another occurrence of אוב in Job 8.8 where MT reads,

כי שאל-נא לדר ראשון וכונן לחקר אבותם

"Set to inquire of a former generation and consider the experience of their fathers."

There is no need to alter אבותם either to אבות , LXX and Vulgate, or to אבותינו , "our fathers," BH. The "fathers" refer to the fathers of the former generation sic "their fathers." The verse exhorts the hearer to consider the experience of a former generation and then to go back further to the stored up wisdom of their fathers. The verse is of the wisdom genre.

Albright, on the oral recommendation of Fitzmeyer, wishes to change אבותם to אובותם and translate the verse,

"Be sure to enquire of men of past ages,
Set about to examine their ghosts."[80]

No other verse in this section is connected with necromancy, the chapter is concerned to point out the good sense of taking a survey of the collected wisdom of past ages; not only the former generation, but right back into the past. There is no need to drag in necromancy, which, in a wisdom context, is rather ludicrous. The best translation of the verse is that of JB

"Question the generation that has passed,
Meditate on the experience of its fathers."

Heidel has also some comment to make on the meaning of אוב and ידעני .[81] He rightly observes that sometimes the אוב and ידעני were thought of as residing in the practitioner of the necromantic cult. He thinks, thus, that in the case of the medium at En-dor, the אוב was a demon which she employed to assist her in raising the spirit of Samuel. He says that the אוב and the spirit of Samuel were two separate entities. I have already commented unfavourably on this sort of interpretation. The two words are, in his opinion, synonymous and are to be regarded as demons in the possession of wizards and witches, who were themselves, by metonymy, called אוב and ידעני, as in 2 Samuel 3.9 and 2 Kings 23.24. This conclusion has already been drawn. He argues, moreover, that the words do not mean spirits from the underworld anywhere in the Old Testament. With regard to Isaiah 8.19 he says that the words there mean "mediums" and "wizards" respectively. This is contradicted by the parallelism (19b "/should they consult/ the dead on behalf of the living"). This points unmistakably to trafficking with the spirits from the underworld. It is not at all clear why Heidel supposes that this argument, i.e. that of parallelism, lacks cogency, for Is. 8.19 is one of the verses

where it is abundantly clear that the two words refer to spirits of the dead which are to be consulted. It has to be admitted that Heidel is determined to remove the Old Testament as far as possible from any taint of paganism, even at the risk of making statements which are quite insupportable.

Finally he argues in the same way with regard to Deut. 18.11, where אוב and ידעני are employed along with the phrase דרש אל-המתים, "one who seeks to the dead." Again the parallelism shows him to be quite wrong. In Is. 29.4 he wishes to translate אוב as "demon." It seems strange that, while he accuses those who would translate אוב as "ghost" of employing arguments which lack cogency, he translates it by a word with which it has no connection anywhere in the Old Testament. There are no good grounds for suggesting that אוב means "demon." He says, "But we have actually no proof that the terms in question (אוב and ידעני) were ever so employed (i.e., as designations for the spirits of the dead) in the Old Testament."[82] This is simply not true. The burden would lie on Heidel to prove that the words did mean "demon." Nowhere does the Old Testament suggest that demons are associated with the underworld or with the practice of necromancy and therefore Heidel is guilty of the intrusion of an idea, which has no foundation within the Old Testament itself. In conclusion it may be said that while Heidel intrudes an idea which does not apply into the Old Testament, he rejects the explanation which the passages in question themselves give, to wit that אוב and ידעני are spirits of the dead and familiar spirits, though occasionally they may refer to the practitioners themselves.

Despite the suggestions of these three scholars I see no reason to alter any of the above conclusions.

Isaiah 65,4a is the last verse to be examined briefly in this context. Yahweh accuses Israel in verses 1-3 of the chapter of failing to hear his voice and walking in their own ways, sacrificing and burning incense to pagan gods. In 4a he accuses them of sitting in tombs:

הַיֹּשְׁבִים בַּקְּבָרוֹת וּבַנְּצוּרִים יָלִינוּ

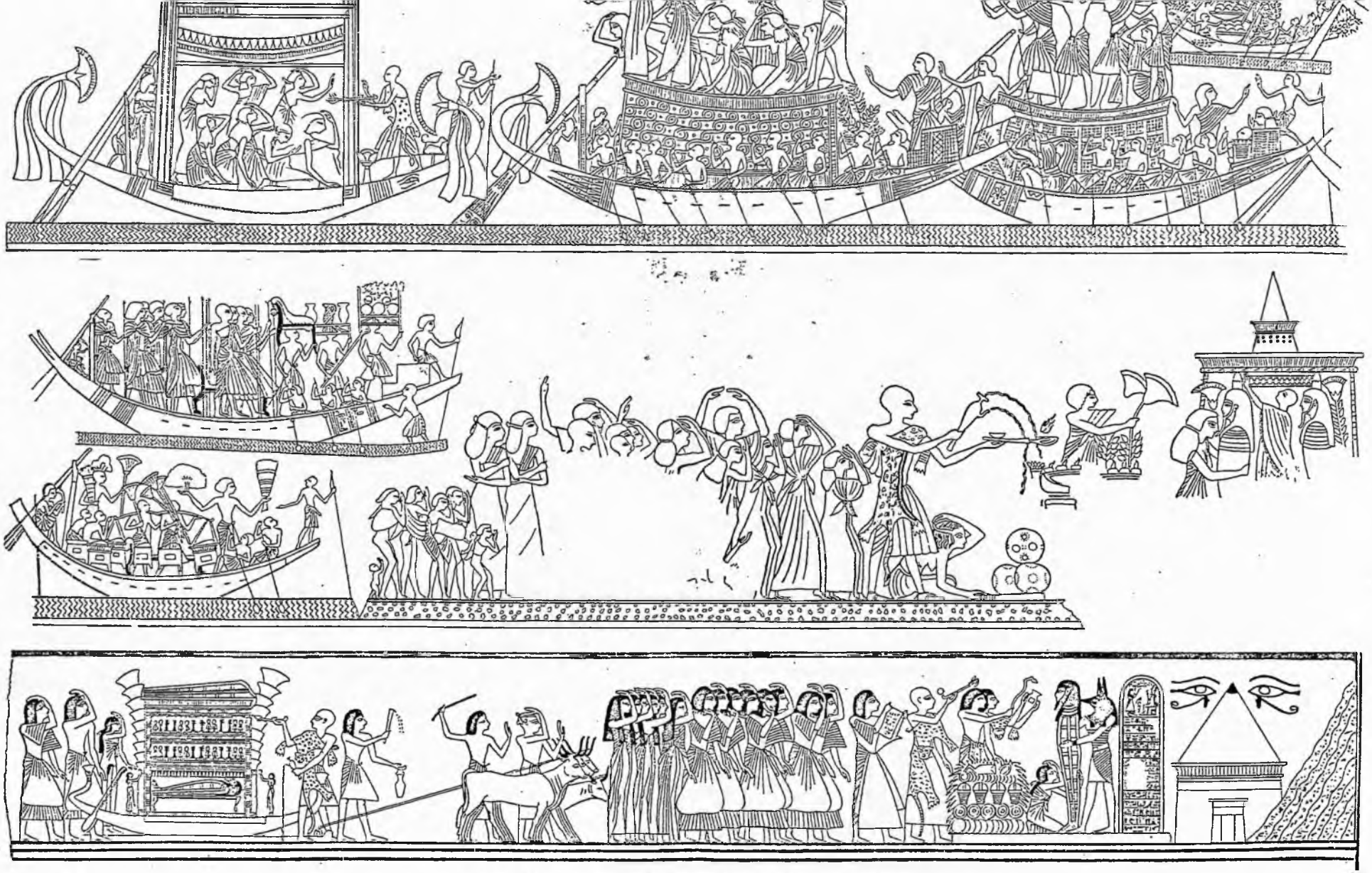
"who sit among tombs and spend the night in secret places."

The obtaining of oracles by incubation was a common practice in the Ancient Near East. The person who wished the oracle spent the night in a temple or on some sacred spot and hoped that the god would reveal himself in a dream and give the required guidance.

This verse probably refers to this practice. Yahweh rebukes those who spend the night among tombs and in the vicinity of graves, hoping to obtain oracles from the deceased.

For בַּנְּצוּרִים , "in secret places;" LXX has ἐν τοῖς σπηλαίοις , "in the caves," which might suggest a Hebrew בַּצּוּרִים , "among rocks" (BH). There is, however, no real need to alter MT as the sense is clear.

It may therefore be concluded that, although the Old Testament condemns una cum voce the practice of consulting the spirits of the dead through the agency of mediums and conjurers, the habit must have existed and flourished at various periods in the history of Israel. Even Saul who had outlawed the cult was forced latterly to have recourse to one, apparently well-known to his courtiers. Manasseh, an apostate from the cult of Yahweh, used the services of such persons, who were in turn exterminated by Josiah. Isaiah condemns the practice, but



FUNERAL PROCESSION AND CEREMONIES AT THE TOMB.

NO. 1. FROM THE TOMB OF NEFERHÔTEP AT THEBES, OF THE TIME OF THE CLOSE OF THE 18TH DYNASTY. AFTER W., III. PL. 67. (Cp. the explanation, p. 320 f.)

NO. 2. FROM THE TOMB OF ROY, THE ESTATE-SUPERINTENDENT, OF THE TIME OF THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH DYNASTY. AFTER W., III. PL. 68. (The priest with the book is the reciter-priest; the bald-headed priest with the panther-skin is the Sem; the priest holding the mummy is dressed as Anubis. The tomb is situate at the slope of the mountain; before it stands the funerary stela.)

[*Between pages* 320 *and* 321.

shows a surprising knowledge of its methods. This belief in the power of the dwellers in the land of the dead to provide answers to questions about the hidden future is well-attested in the Ancient Near East and the evidence from the Old Testament points to the fact that it was well-established in Israel, however much the exclusive protagonists of Yahweh, the lord of the living, tried to stamp it out.

It now remains to enquire whether there was a belief in the Old Testament that the dead had to be provided with food and water in the afterlife, as in other countries in the Fertile Crescent.

The dead in the Ancient World were very much dependent on the living for any comfort which they might enjoy in the next world; but the dead had the power to torment the living if they failed in their provision of funerary offerings and libations. In Egypt the dead were sent to their tombs with many ceremonies and great scenes of lamentation. Some of these can be seen on representations of the funerary rites from various tombs.[83] In the first register (see facing page) the sarcophagus containing the mummy of the deceased lies on a barque; round the sarcophagus kneel wailing women with their breasts bared as a sign of grief. The barque is sailing across the Nile towards the burial place on the western bank; it is preceded in its progress by other craft. The boat immediately in front of the funerary ship contains women who lament the deceased, facing in the direction of the mummy. The foremost boat contains male relations. In the second register a fourth boat is depicted which carries the colleagues and friends of the deceased, decked out in the insignia of their various offices. The fifth boat carries servants with flowers, food and other offerings. In the same register the ceremony of opening of the mouth is performed by a priest, while another pours out a libation, burns incense and makes a food offering to the deceased;

all the while the women continue to lament, Most of the females depicted were probably professional mourners. The third register containing scenes from another tomb, shows the mummy being dragged along on a sledge, followed by weeping women and preceded by an incense-burning priest. In front of the tomb, behind which lie the cliffs of the Theban Western Necropolis, the same ceremonies are carried out as with the other mummy above. The mummy is supported by a priest wearing the jackal-head of the god Anubis, the lord of the necropolis.

In Mesopotamia also, the dead were buried with due ceremonies and offerings. Gilgamesh wept bitterly for his friend Enkidu, like a professional wailing woman:

"Hear me, O Elders, [and give ear] unto me,
it is for Enkidu, my [friend] that I weep,
Moaning bitterly like a wailing woman."

Gilgamesh then proceeds to rites of mourning common to the whole of the Near East,

"He paces back and forth before [the couch],
Pulling out (his hair) and strewing [it forth],
Tearing off and flinging down his finery."[84]

The lamentations went on for seven days and the deceased was supposed to hear all that went on and be satisfied.

The mourning rites followed a similar pattern in Canaan. The chief god, El, when he heard of Baal's death did as follows:

"Thereupon Lutpan kindly
god came down from (his) throne, he sat
on a stool, and (coming down) from the stool

he sat
on the ground; he strewed straw
of mourning on his head, dust in which a man wallows
on his pate; he tore the clothing
of his folded loin-cloth; he set up a bloody pillar
on a stone, two pillars in the forest;
he gashed his (two) cheeks and (his) chin,
thrice harrowed the upper part of his arm, ploughed
(his) chest like a garden, thrice harrowed (his) belly
like a vale. He lifted up his voice and cried:
Baal is dead."

After Anat had buried Baal, she organised some sort of funeral feast or offering for the dead god, with a massive slaughter of animals.[85] She expresses her sorrow over the death of Aqhat, whom she had herself slain, with lamentation and weeping, but this was of a traditional nature and not dictated by any real grief.[86]

As in the case of necromancy the main evidence for the possible existence of the cult of the dead in the Old Testament comes from legal prohibition. Leviticus 19.27,28 prohibits the cutting of the hair or the laceration of the flesh on behalf of the dead:

27. לא תקפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנך
28. ושרט לנפש לא תתנו בבשרכם וכתבת קעקע לא תתנו
בכם אני יהוה

"You shall not round off the corners of your head and you shall not damage (i.e. shave) the end(s) of your beard; you shall not make incisions on your flesh for the dead or make marks (i.e. tattooes) upon yourselves, I am Yahweh."

LXX reads φθερεῖτε , i.e. וְתַשְׁחִיתוּ for וְתַשְׁחֵת and τοῦ πώγωνος ὑμῶν i.e. זְקַנְכֶם for זָקָן . This puts all the verbs and the suffixes in the plural and reads more evenly. LXX is merely attempting to smooth an uneven text.

שׂרט means, "to slit" and is cognate with the Arabic شَرَطَ which is used of slitting the ears of a camel.[87] Here it means cutting the flesh and lacerating it until the blood runs. The cutting of the flesh was probably an attempt on the part of the living to provide life-blood for the dead. In the Ancient East blood was the essence of life. The frenzied self-laceration of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18.28 was an effort on the part of the worshippers to provide the deity with life-blood by allowing their own blood to flow into the ground, i.e. the underworld where the god was imprisoned. This bloody rite is frequently referred to in the Old Testament, e.g. Hosea 7.14; Jeremiah 16.6; 41.5 (from an actual fertility rite practised by some of the co-religionists of Jeremiah) 47.5. In the verse which we are considering it is blood for the dead.

The mutilation of the body, the tearing out of the hair, the making of tattoo-like marks on the body, represent the attempts of the mourners to make themselves unrecognisable in the face of the returning spirits of the dead, thus protecting themselves from any evil which a spirit might attempt to wreak upon the living kith and kin.

Another explanation for the removal of the hair is proffered by Elliger.[88] The ancient Semites believed that a great force lay in the hair. This is borne out by the tale of Samson, Judges 16.17, whose great strength lay in his hair (cf. also the massive weight of the shorn hair of the handsome Absalom, 2 Samuel 14.26). Thus the

removal of the hair was an offering of strength to the dead. The Jewish tradition is that a man must not make his temples like the back of his neck, by shaving off his "side galleries." The orthodox sects in Israel today may be seen wearing long ringlets dangling in front of each ear.

All of these customs have their roots in the mythology of death in the world around Israel. They are mentioned here merely to be condemned out of hand as being impossible for the people of Yahweh. Leviticus 21.5 outlaws the self-same habits. The Israelite had to be distinguished from his neighbours and therefore any attempt to adopt the beliefs about the dead or the practices connected with their burial was completely forbidden, and all such superstitions were tabooed. This attitude is also adopted in Deuteronomy 14.1,

בנים אתם ליהוה אלהיכם לא תתגדדו ולא־תשימו
קרחה בין עיניכם למת

"You are the sons of Yahweh your god; you will not cut yourselves nor will you make baldness between your eyes for the dead."

This law is placed here without the slightest regard for context. The phrase בנים אתם ליהוה is a strange one for Deuteronomy. Like the law in Leviticus this prohibition places an interdict on the common rites of mourning in the Semitic world. For Israel there was to be no relation between the living and the dead.

Buis and Leclerq suggest tentatively, that מת may not be a dead man, but the name of a god, i.e. Mot. They refer to the lamentations held for Mot/Tammuz each autumn,[89] but we have no evidence that a wailing for Mot was held each autumn; the Ugaritic texts give

us no information about this. Lamentations for Tammuz were seasonal in character, but there is no evidence in the Ugaritic texts that Mot was a Tammuz figure. מת here is merely a corpse, a dead person. Naturally, the existence of the prohibition implies that such rites for the dead did take place and that beliefs about the nature and powers of the dead in Israel all too often resembled those of her neighbours. The opposition to the cult of the dead is something of a tradition in pre-exilic Israel.

Deuteronomy 26 deals with the tithing of the harvest in the third year and verse 14 contains the following statement;

לא אכלתי באני ממנו ולא בערתי ממנו בטמא ולא
בתתי ממנו למת שמעתי בקול יהוה

"I have not eaten of it (the tithe) in my mourning, I have not taken from it while I was unclean and I have not given any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the voice of Yahweh ..."

Buis and Leclerq again suggest that we may have to do with Canaanite ritual connected with the mourning of Baal/Tammuz, but we do not know whether Baal was in fact mourned each year.[90]

אנִי is equivalent to the Ugaritic ʾun, "mourning or grief,"[91] but it cannot be deduced from this mere fact that a ritual or cultic lamentation is intended. Again, it is improbable that מת means "to Mot." All these proffered explanations are speculative and have little or no evidence to support them either in the Ugaritic texts or in the Old Testament. While Canaanite customs may have caused the prohibitions of Leviticus and prompted the confession of this verse, the explanation is surely that bread eaten by a mourner is polluted and that if a mourner ate part of the tithe it would defile the whole tithe. Any of the tithe offered to the dead would also render the whole unclean.

Attempts must therefore have been made from time to time to give offerings to the dead.

2 Samuel 3.31-39 deals with the funeral lamentations for the dead Abner, the son of Ner, the right hand man of Ishbotheth the son of Saul. Abner was slain by David's commander, Joab, as the outcome of a political vendetta. David, thereupon, ordered a court mourning and lamentation to be made for the dead man in which he himself took a leading part (v. 31). Parrot asks if this were not a rite to pacify the angry spirit of the dead.[92] There is no real evidence for this; the whole funeral was, for the most part, an astute political move on the part of David to dissociate himself in public from all responsibility for the death of Abner.

Psalm 106 is a psalm of praise which recounts the continual saving love of Yahweh in the face of the constant apostasy of the Israelites. In verse 28 we find;

וַיִּצָּמְדוּ לְבַעַל פְּעוֹר וַיֹּאכְלוּ זִבְחֵי־מֵתִים

"And they joined themselves to the Baal of Peor and they ate the sacrifices (offered to) the dead."

The account of this apostasy to the Baal of Peor in Numbers 25, does not say anything about eating sacrifices offered to the dead. According to Kraus, what is meant here is a community meal in which the living join with the numinous dead who were the givers of fertility.[93] Certainly there is no doubt that the apostates had sacrificed to the dead and were eating a communal meal.

Jeremiah 16 speaks of grievous distresses which will befall Israel, death will strike at great and small alike and there will be no mourning for them, nor will they be buried, vss. 6,7:

ו וּמֵתוּ גְּדֹלִים וּקְטַנִּים בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לֹא יִקָּבְרוּ וְלֹא יִסְפְּדוּ לָהֶם וְלֹא יִתְגַּדַּד וְלֹא יִקָּרַח
לָהֶם (ז) וְלֹא יִפְרְסוּ לָהֶם עַל-אֵבֶל לְנַחֲמוֹ עַל-מֵת
וְלֹא יַשְׁקוּ אוֹתָם כּוֹס תַּנְחוּמִים עַל-אָבִיו
וְעַל-אִמּוֹ

"(6) For both great and small shall die in this land, says Yahweh, and they shall not be buried, nor shall they lament for them, nor cut themselves for them, nor make themselves bald for them, (7) No-one shall break bread for the mourner to comfort him for the dead, nor give them a cup of consolation for their father or mother."

These mourning customs do not seem to excite, per se, the disapproval of the prophet, who does not condemn them, but merely says that they are useless in face of the impending catastrophe. Food and drink were given to the mourners for, probably, two reasons,

1. Because the food and drink in the bereaved household would automatically be unclean.

2. Out of sympathy for the bereaved.

The כּוֹס תַּנְחוּמִים is not mentioned anywhere else in the Old Testament.

These mourning customs are also mentioned in Isaiah 22.12: Ezekiel 24.17: Amos 8.10 and Micah 1.16, all without the slightest condemnation. None of the verses in question have any mention of laceration or incision of the flesh. It would seem, therefore, that these mourning customs had survived, because they had ceased

to be associated with the cult of the dead, which the Israelites had first encountered among the Canaanites. The customs of mourning which survived were completely sundered from a mythology which gave powers of fearsomeness and fertility to the dead. The customs became no more than expressions of grief on the part of the bereaved at the grievous loss.

We may conclude that within the pages of the Old Testament there is little evidence for a strong and flourishing cult of the dead such as existed in neighbouring countries. What we must, on the other hand, beware of doing is to deny the existence of such a cult in popular faith and practice. The fact that there are early prohibitions against it shows that a struggle took place, in these as in other matters, with the accepted beliefs and practices of the ancient east. However, as time went on, the rites of mourning became expressions of grief with no other mythological import or significance.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament ii (London, 1967) p. 213
2. C. Virolleaud, Revue des Études Semitiques et Babylonaica (Paris, 1940) pp. 77 - 82.
3. Rephaim I ii 1 CML p. 69
4. Rephaim I ii 3 ff. CML p. 69
5. Rephaim III i 13 ff CML p. 69
6. CML p. 69 Note 8
7. R. Dussaud, Les Découvertes de Ras Shamra et l'Ancien Testament (Paris, 1941) pp. 185 ff.
8. A van den Branden, Grammaire Phénicienne (Beyrouth, 1969) p. 25
9. Rephaim III ii 8 CML p. 69
10. Haussig op.cit. Wörterbuch p. 287
11. Dussaud, op.cit., pp. 186 ff.
12. UT p. 485 No. 2346
    Aisleitner, (Wörterbuch der Ug.) p. 295 No. 2527
    CML p. 155 and Notes 22, 23, 24.
13. C.H. Gordon, Ugaritic Literature (Rome, 1949) p. 103 for rp'u b'l; cf. also UT p. 54
14. CML p. 71
15. A.S. Kapelrud, Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts (Copenhagen, 1952) pp. 47 ff.
16. UT p. 426 No. 1342
17. H.L. Ginsberg, "The Legend of King Keret," BASOR Suppl. 2/3 (1946) p. 23 B col. iii.
18. ibid., p. 41
19. Keret III iii 3,14 CML p. 37

20. Rephaim I i 1 ff. CML p. 67

21. Rephaim I ii 1 ff. CML p. 68

22. Rephaim II i 1 ff. CML p. 67

23. Rephaim III i, ii CML pp. 69 ff.

24. Baal II vi 40-61 CML pp. 100 ff.

25. J. Gray, "The Rephaim" PEQ (1948-49) pp. 127-131

26. ibid., p. 130

27. ibid., p. 132

28. Aqhat I i 36 f. CML pp. 58 f.

29. Aqhat II v 3 ff. CML pp. 52 f.

30. van den Branden, op.cit., p. 22 𐤓𐤐𐤀 , in Phoenician is a participle of the qatil-type = Heb. רֹפֵא both are active: p. 101 𐤓𐤐𐤀 "a doctor" is a noun formed from the participle, "one who heals" (No. 271).

31. Aqhat I ii 5 ff CML p. 61

32. Gray. "DTN and RP'UM in Ancient Ugarit" PEQ (1952-53) pp. 39 ff.

33. A. Caquot, "Les Rephaim Ougaritiques" Syria xxxvii (Paris, 1960) pp. 75-93

34. ibid., p. 75

35. ibid., p. 80

36. Baal I vi 7 ff. CML pp. 114 f.

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39. Zandee, op.cit., (Book of Gates) pp. 282 ff.

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CHAPTER 4

The Waters of Death

This chapter will deal with the connection which, I will argue, exists between water, including the primeval deep, and death in the Old Testament. The background material relevant to this chapter, from the Ancient Near East, will be briefly surveyed.

EGYPT

In Egypt the primeval cosmic ocean from which the world emerged in the first time, was called Nun, probably more primitively Nuu.[1] The Nun was an inert mass of water, yet not apparently devoid of a creative potentiality, for its role in creation was not regarded by the Egyptian savants as entirely negative.[2] Each morning the sun rose from the primeval ocean to begin his journey across the sky in his day-barque. On the sarcophagus of Sety I (c. 1303-1290 B.C.), there is a representation of the morning barque of the sun-god, Re, being raised up out of Nun by the god himself (i.e. Nun) who holds the ship with both hands. The barque leaves the primordial ocean by way of the mountain of the rising sun, represented by a blank corridor and a black sun on the far right of the picture. Re is in his form of Khepri, the scarab beetle, rolling the ball of the sun ahead of him. Above the barque, Nut, the goddess of the sky, reaches down to receive the sun rising from its nightly journey through the underworld. She stands on top of another deity, probably Shu, the god of the air.[3] The sun-god passed through the twelve divisions of the underworld during the twelve hours of the night, the underworld lay deep in Nun, therefore the god had to rise from Nun each morning.

From Nun, the primeval waste of water, came also the bnbn-hill upon which the creator god Atum sat to begin his work of creation.[4] The chief cult-centres of Upper and Lower Egypt sought to verify the truth of their rival claims to be the original spot where the primeval hillock had emerged from Nun.[5] Each temple had a sacred lake in the middle of which was the island thought to be the bnbn-hill. That a potential fertility resided in Nun may be seen from the somewhat distinctive cosmology of the Upper Egyptian city of Hermopolis, the cult centre of Thoth, the scribe of the gods, the god of wisdom and a moon-god, generally represented with the head of an ibis or in the form of a dog-headed baboon, in which guise he greeted the rising sun. In the temple of Hermopolis it was believed that a group of eight divinities, the Ogdoad, had emerged in successive pairs out of Nun and proceeded with the task of creation. The first pair of the deities were Nun and Naunet.[6] Nun was, of course, the primeval watery chaos, his consort, Naunet, the heaven which stretched above Nun in the underworld, where most things were reversed; she was opposite of the heaven above the earth.[7] Nun surrounded the earth which swam on it like a large flat disk. All water in the cosmos, the Nile, the water from dug wells and the rain from "the Nile in the sky," came from Nun. In the course of time Nun became a personalised divinity, the father of the gods, who, in conjunction with Naunet brought forth Atum, the creator god. In Memphis the cult city of Ptah, the priests identified Nun with their tutelary deity under the name Ptah-Nun. In Thebes he was identified with Amun the city god.[8] The early idea of Nun as an inert expanse of water may be seen from a passage in an eighteenth century version of the Book of the Dead. Amun threatens mankind:

> "I shall destroy all that I have made and this land will return into Nun, into the flood-waters, as (in) its first state."[9]

There exist in Egypt, ideas of the ocean as being hostile to life.[10] There is a text in the "Teaching of King Meri-ka-re" which makes this quite clear. It comes from a section dealing with the beneficence of the god towards mankind:

> "Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster."

The phrase "water-monster" is literally, "the submerger (determined with the figure of a crocodile) of the water." This may well be a Tiamat figure, a monster of the deep defeated by the god at creation.[11] Kaiser translates the same group of hieroglyphs as "the greediness of the water."[12] Erman offers a rather different interpretation, "he allayed the thirst(?) for water."[13] But it may be presumed by the question mark that he was not sure of his translation. I prefer to accept the translation of Wilson, but with the warning of Kaiser that the Egyptian text is difficult to establish, however the determinative of the crocodile seems to point to a monster of some description. Kaiser makes the further interesting point that the very close unity which existed between Egypt and Ugarit in the time of the Middle Kingdom, could have led to the importation of the myth of a struggle against the primeval sea, the chief protagonist of which struggle was Seth, the Egyptian counterpart of the Canaanite Baal. From the XVIIIth Dynasty on, the word ym was used increasingly for "sea" in Egyptian literature.[14] This is rather speculative, but there are undoubted traces of the primeval sea as hostile to life.

The representation of the sun-god leaving Nun in the morning was noted above; yet he also left the underworld. It is clear from numerous references in Egyptian literature that there was a connection between Nun and the realm of the dead. Zandee, in his book which deals with the unpleasant aspects of the Egyptian after-life, has made it plain that sometimes the primeval ocean was thought of as the place wherein the dead dwelt. He indicates that the deceased king goes first of all to the underworld, to the dead, "those who are in Nun," then the monarch sails to heaven where the gods welcome him as one who has been in the depths of Nun; "Come resident of Nun ....."[15] These dead were the drowned ones in Nun. The "Book of the Dead" has several references to the dead as being in Nun.

> "He (the deceased) has been examined by the numerous spokesmen and his soul has been confronted with him; his mouth has been found true upon earth. Behold him in front of thee, master of the gods; he has arrived in the land of the just, and he appears glorious, like a god, he shines like the Ennead who are in the sky; he raises his step in Kher-aha (centre of the cult of Atum-Re), and he sees the venerable Orion: he advances in the Nun without being repulsed. He sees the masters of the Duat (underworld) he relishes the sustenance of the Ennead and sits with them."[16]

Kher-aha and Duat are both names for the underworld, and thus Nun, in this case, must also mean the dwelling place of the dead through which the justified dead man walks. Further is found:

> "Formula for conveying magic powers to Osiris in the Empire of the dead.

> As he says, 'O Khepri, who has come into being by himself, who holds sway over the plateau of his mother, who gives the jackals to those who are in the Nun, and the gods to those who are in the divine tribunal ....."[17]

The meaning is rather obscure, but the phrase, "those who are in the Nun," must again intend the dead, as the chapter is designed to give Osiris (i.e. the deceased) powers of magic in the realm of the dead. In this chapter the barque of Re is also mentioned as being drawn through the underworld. Another chapter points to the opening of the underworld that the justified may ascend to heaven;

> "Formula for opening the tomb.
> Words said by N., 'The depths have become open for the dwellers in Nun, the step has become free for the dwellers of the light. The depths are opened for Shu that he may go out!"[18]

Shu, the god of the air, seems, in this text, to leave the underworld; Nun has opened presumably for the dead to fly to heaven, in the same way as they were supposed to be able to leave the tomb. Elsewhere the deceased speaks of his progress through the underworld and claims that he knows the paths of the Nun;

> "It is I who know the ways of Nun."[19]

These texts from the "Book of the Dead" will serve to illustrate the idea of the dead dwelling in Nun, the primeval ocean.

In his study of Coptic representations of the underworld, Zandee remarks that the primeval Nun was still considered the abode of the dead, but that it seems in some cases, to have lost its watery connotations. The name is noun in the Coptic "Descent of Paul",

in which the apostle goes down to the primeval ocean and sees the dwelling place of all souls.[20] The ocean in Egypt was a threat to life and was regarded as the place where the dead dwelt.

MESOPOTAMIA

In Babylonian sources there is the figure of Tiamat, which has been much discussed in connection with the Hebrew word tehōm . In Babylonian literature Tiamat appears as the primal salt-water ocean, while Apsu, her husband, was the sweet-water sea.[21] It is evident from the Babylonian creation epic, Enuma Eliš, "When on High," that Tiamat represented a hostile and monstrous element in the cosmos, rendering it unsafe until she was finally annihilated by Marduk, the champion of the gods.[22] Water could be a terrible and devastating element in life, as the dwellers in the Land of the Two Rivers well knew, when the Tigris and Euphrates, in full flood and laden with the melted snows from the Armenian highlands, turned their flat domain into an inland sea, destroying crops and cattle alike. In the "Epic of Gilgamesh," the full fury of water is let loose in the flood which obliterated mankind and even terrified the gods;

> "The gods were frightened by the deluge,
> and, shrinking back, they ascended to the heaven of Anu.
> The gods cowered like dogs,
> crouched against the outer wall."[23]

Ḫubur was the name for the river of the underworld and the word was used as a designation for the underworld itself. Demons and trespassing ghosts of the dead were banished to the underworld across the river Ḫubur. In the Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi, "I will praise the Lord of Wisdom," the suppliant gives thanks to Marduk for restoring him

to life, in terms of a rescue from the underworld;

"The Lord (Marduk) took hold of me,
The Lord set me on my feet,
The Lord gave me life,
He rescued me (from the pit),
He summoned me (from) destruction,
(.....) he pulled me from the Hubur river."[25]

Further it is said in a preceptory hymn to Shamash;

"You dismiss (to the underworld) the rogue who is surrounded.
You bring up from the underworld river him entangled in a lawsuit."

In line 62, "from the underworld" is, in Akkadian, ina hubur.[26] Tiamat is sometimes called "Mother Hubur;"

"Mother Hubur, she who fashions all things,
added matchless weapons, bore monster-serpents,
sharp of tooth, unsparing of fang."[24]

By her title she is connected with the underworld, possibly the place in which the country of the dead lay.

There are, however, much clearer references to the deep as the abode of the dead, this time under the term apsū. Apsu was the sweet-water ocean and the husband of Tiamat. The word is also used as an ordinary noun as an appellation for, not only the deep, but for the underworld:

"Headache has sprung up from the surface of the underworld,
An evil cough has left its apsū."

In these lines the sufferer is complaining of demons bearing various ills which have risen to attack him from the apsū, which must mean the nether world, especially as it stands in parallel to other words for the realm of the dead.[27] Later the demons are driven back to their grim abode by the power of Marduk;

"To the surface of the underworld he took (the headache),
(He sent) down the evil cough to its apsū,
The irresistible ghost he returned (to) É-KUR."[28]

É-KUR is a Sumerian term for the underworld and thus, apsū, the deep, also means the underworld, presumably because it was believed that the nether world was set in the depths of the cosmic ocean. The powerful glare of the sun-god, Šmš, is able to penetrate that gloomy realm;

"Shamash, your glare reaches down to the abyss,
So that the monsters of the deep behold your light."

The Akkadian of line 37 is,

bir-bir-ru-ka ina ap-si-i ú-ri-du

"(lit.) your luminosity to the apsū goes down."

apsū is parallel to tamtu, "sea," in those lines.[29] CAD, commenting on the meaning of birbirru, "glare, shine, luminosity," translates the above phrase somewhat differently, though most appositely for the purpose of this chapter;

/-^{d}UTU_/ bir-bir-ru-ka ina apsî ūridu

"Your shining light, O Shamash, descends into the nether world."[30]

Utu was the Sumerian name for the sun-god.

In another two lines of the selfsame hymn to Shamash apsū and tamtu are again parallel to one another.[31] Ebeling makes the

interesting observation that Marduk was regarded as being imprisoned in Tiamat, during the Akitu-festival;

> "The 'Lord' (Marduk) who, at the Akitu-festival, sits in the midst of Tiamat."[32]

Like Tammuz, Marduk spent a certain time in the underworld each year, and if he was thought to be in Tiamat, then Tiamat must have been sometimes conceived of as the abode of the dead. From the evidence it may be inferred that in Mesopotamia, as in Egypt, the land of the dead was thought to lie in the depths of the world ocean. This idea may be traced to Sumerian sources in the occurrence of the phrase, AB-ZU E-NU-UN, the apsū of the Anunnaki, who were the gods of the underworld.[33] Wensinck asserts that, in Semitic thought, the ocean was seen as the seat of death as well as of life, that it could be an element in the cosmos hostile to life and order.[34] It could be a part of the world of chaos threatening always to disrupt the ordered world.

CANAAN

The Ugaritic texts provide us with no evidence of a cosmology in which the world emerged from the depths of the primal ocean. This may simply be because not enough is known about Canaanite cosmological thought. In the Ugaritic texts the sea-god is Yam (ym). He was also regarded as a monster, a sort of sea-dragon whom Baal defeated, perhaps he was even imagined as a chaos-monster as Albright asserts.[35] Gray concurs with this opinion. He thinks that the conflict of Baal with the tyrannical waters of zbl ym (Prince Sea) and ṯpt nhr (Judge River), may be likened to the conflict of Marduk with Tiamat.[36] Yam sent his messengers to the gods to demand the surrender of Baal and the Ugaritic divinities display the same fear as their Mesopotamian counterparts.

Baal, after the manner of Marduk, slaughters Yam;

ktmḥṣ . ltn . bṯn . brḥ

tkly . bṯn . ʿqtln

ʸšlyṭ . d . sbʿt.rʾšm

"As you (Baal) smote Ltn the primitive serpent,
and destroyed the writhing serpent,
the mighty tyrant with seven heads."[37]

It is difficult, however, to extrapolate any cosmic creative significance from the battle between Baal and Yam, as El, the pantheon's head, was regarded as the creator.

Can a similar connection be established between water and death in the Old Testament? The discussion of the Tiāmat/tehōm relationship has gone on for many years and I have nothing to add to it. Kaiser seems to me to make the most balanced comment about the relationship of any that I have read. He says that it is very difficult to conceive of tehōm as a proper name, even in spite of the fact that it lacks the article.[38]

The discovery of the word thm/thmtm (dual), "the deep," in Ugaritic has not supported the view that tehōm is a personal name. The word thm in Ugaritic is used in parallelism with ym in, for example, the phrase,

gp ym // gp thm

"the shore of the sea // the shore of the ocean."[39]

If the word were a direct loan-word from the Babylonian Tiāmat, then it ought to have a feminine ending, which it lacks. Tehōm is related to the Akkadian tâmtu. In Akkadian the consonants ʿ and

ḫ (pharyngal) and ʾ and h have been reduced to ʾ under the influence of Sumerian which did not possess the consonants in this series.[40] Thus tâmtu / tiʾāmtu is, in Hebrew, tehōm (cf. also Ug. thm and Arabic تِهَامَة).[41] Heidel does, indeed, note that tehōm comes close to being a proper name, but that it has no mythical personality in the Old Testament. It stands mainly for the primeval sea, whereas Tiamat was the primal salt-water ocean and had the characteristics of a monster in her conflict with Marduk.[42]

תְּהוֹם is, chiefly, used to designate the primeval cosmic ocean, the deep, as, for example in Gen. 1.2; 7.11 (תְּהוֹם רַבָּה); 49.25. In Exodus 15.5,8 the plural is employed when Pharaoh and his company sink into the sea as they are swallowed up by the underworld. In Deut. 8.7 the use of the plural denotes the fountains which draw their sources from the great deep; the word is parallel to עֲיָנֹת , "springs." Deut. 33.13 has the word referring again to the primeval ocean. Further uses of the word תְּהוֹם in this sense are;

> Job 28.14; 38.16 (where it is parallel to יָם); 41.24 (Heb.): Pss. 42.8; 104.6 (where it is parallel to מַיִם as in numerous other cases); Prov. 8.27; Isaiah 51.10 (again with יָם); Ezekiel 26.19: Jonah 2.6: Habakkuk 3.10. In the plural form the word is also found in Pss. 33.17; 77.17; 78.15; 106.9; 107.26 and 148.7: Prov. 3.20: Isaiah 63.13.

As I have noted תְּהוֹם is used in parallel with יָם and מַיִם and these two words will occur in the following survey of passages which, I shall argue, refer to the location of the land of the dead beneath the great deep.[43]

A. Jonah 2.3-7

These verses are part of the so-called "Psalm of Jonah," (vss. 3-10) which, it is alleged, he spoke in his distress from מִמְּעֵי הַדָּגָה , the ~~innards~~ belly of the great fish which had swallowed him. That it is an interpolation into the rest of the book, possibly inspired by the words of verse 2, has long been recognised by the majority of commentators.[44] Though the psalm bears a very strong resemblance to other psalms, in parts, there is no need to suggest that it is a mélange of verses culled from other psalms.[45] The psalm is a thanksgiving for the rescue of the suppliant from some situation of extreme distress. In both psalms of lamentation and thanksgiving, distress or serious trouble is often depicted in terms of an entry into the sphere of death and the power of the underworld. The language of the psalm is in no real way apposite to the plight of Jonah who, in the belly of the great fish, would scarcely feel like rendering a thanksgiving for rescue. If this was the purpose it would have been more apposite after verse 11, as, in fact, Marti suggests.[46] But it is probably in its original position. The brevity of the book is not in keeping with the insertion of the psalm by the author of the book. Thus, on the whole, it seems best to conclude that the psalm was inserted by a later editor who missed the prayer mentioned in verse 2.[47]

Insertions of such psalms into prose narratives were not unknown, e.g. 1 Sam. 2.1-10 (the prayer of Hannah) and Isaiah 38.9-20 (the plaint of Hezekiah). Furthermore, verse 11 follows on very naturally from verse 2 in the prose narrative and it is in keeping with the rather clipped style of the author, "Then Jonah prayed ..... and Yahweh spoke to the great fish."

I am disinclined to believe that the psalm is one of thanksgiving for a rescue from drowning; the water is used figuratively to emphasise the distress.

Verse 2 forms the introduction;

וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו מִמְּעֵי הַדָּגָה

"Then Jonah prayed to Yahweh his God from the belly of the fish."

דָּגָה is used here in the feminine singular, elsewhere in the book it appears in the masculine as in 2.1,11. This probably indicates that this verse was inserted by the later interpolator to bridge the gap between the psalm, which he wished to add, and the preceding prose material.

Verse 3 outlines the cause for the thanksgiving, namely that Yahweh had answered the author in the time of his distress;

וַיֹּאמֶר קָרָאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֶל־יְהוָה וַיַּעֲנֵנִי
מִבֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל שִׁוַּעְתִּי שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי

"And he said, 'I called to Yahweh because of my distress and he answered me; from the innermost part of Sheol I cried, you heard my voice.'"

Three older commentators, Marti, Sellin and Wade[48] think that the use of the word בֶּטֶן, "belly," implies the concept of Sheol as a monster of insatiable greed. This may well be the case, for מִבֶּטֶן שְׁאוֹל, "from the belly of Sheol," may have been likened, in the mind of the later interpolator, to the "belly of the great fish," and thus prompted him to insert this psalm as suitable. It may be, however, that the use of בֶּטֶן signifies no more than the "innermost part." בֶּטֶן is employed in this sense

with the first person singular suffix in Psalms 31,10; 44.26; Job 32.19; Proverbs 22.18 and Habakkuk 3.16. On balance the verse probably alludes to the figure of Death the Monster.

In verse 4 the suppliant regards himself as hurled by Yahweh into the depths of the sea;

ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר יסבבני
כל-משבריך וגליך עלי עברו

"For you hurled me into the deep on the high seas and the flood was around me; all your breakers and rolling waves swept over me."

BH suggests that מצולה is a gloss on בלבב ימים, for it lacks the preposition ב and its presence spoils the metre. Marti and later Robinson have both proposed rather the deletion of בלבב ימים as the gloss on מצולה.[49] On the other hand, Weiser and Keller leave both phrases intact.[50] This seems to be the most satisfactory solution because בלבב ימים represents the location at which the suppliant is cast into the מצולה. Wade regards בלבב ימים as meaning "into the heart of the seas," and cites, in support of this interpretation Ezekiel 27.4,25,26.[51] Now, as I hope to demonstrate below, this is precisely what בלבב ימים does not mean, for in Ezekiel 27 it signifies "on the high seas." It is, therefore, more satisfactory to regard בלבב ימים as representing that it was on the high seas that the suppliant was flung into the deep by Yahweh. The interpolator of the psalm no doubt interpreted it in this way, for it harmonised with the plight of Jonah. It may be that ב has fallen out before מצולה due to haplography

(ימים לבב [ב]). In any event, it is best to leave MT as it stands as no deletion serves any real purpose.

נהר most probably refers to the currents of the great deep; LXX has ποταμοί , "rivers" and the Vulgate, flumina, also "rivers." The second half of the verse (b-b in BH) is exactly parallel to psalm 42.8. The picture is that of the distressed man sinking into the deep, as he flounders helplessly on the high seas; the way to the underworld lay through the currents of the ocean. As was noted, the plaint of this verse is peculiarly apposite to the plight of the prophet Jonah, who was thrown overboard by the sailors while the ship ploughed through tempestuous seas far from land.

In verse 5 the sufferer feels that he is rejected by Yahweh;

ואני אמרתי נגרשתי מנגד עיניך
אך אוסיף להביט אל-היכל קדשך

"Then I said, 'I am abandoned beyond your care: shall I ever look again on your Holy Temple?'"

θ supports the alteration of אַךְ , "but, yet," to אֵיךְ , "how." Keller thinks that this emendation is unnecessary for he interprets the latter half of the verse as a statement by the suppliant that, despite his great affliction, he will continue to look to Yahweh's Holy Temple.[52] It is unlikely that, as the suppliant felt himself already in the grip of the power of death and the underworld, he would make a firm assertion that he would look on the temple. His situation is one of the gravest uncertainty and the interrogative form is much more in keeping with the tenor of the verse and the passage.

The real Jonah ben Amittai would have wished to gaze on some northern shrine.

Verse 6 outlines the terrifying journey to the land below, through the waters of the great deep;

אפפוני מים עד־נפש תהום יסבבני
סוף חבוש לראשי

"The waters engulfed me, (threatening) my life, the deep was round about me, reeds were wrapped around my head."

Marti, Sellin and Robinson wish to attach לקצבי הרי to from 7a on to the end of this verse, metri causa, i.e. "the reeds were around my head at the foot of the mountains."[53] Weiser and Keller wish to leave MT as it stands.[54] It seems wiser to accept this as the argument from metre and parallelism is weak.

לקצבי הרי is not really parallel to תהום and our knowledge of Hebrew metre is not sufficient to demand a re-grouping of the verse. As we shall see לקצבי הרי reads perfectly well where it stands.

עד־נפש is admirably translated by the German phrase given in Sellin, es ging ans Leben.[55] For תהום LXX has ἀβυσσος, "the abyss, deep." Hebrew cosmology conceived of the earth as standing on pillars which were in fact, the bases of the mountains and reached far down into the recesses of the subterranean ocean.[56] In this verse the author reaches the deepest parts of the sea and the reeds, like a net, draw him inexorably to Sheol. The terror conveyed by this verse is reminiscent of that felt by the Duke of Clarence in a dream which he relates to his assassins before they drown him in the malmsey butt (Shakespeare, Richard III Act 1 Sc. i 21 ff);

"Lord, Lord methought what pain it was to drown,
What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!
What sights of ugly death within mine eyes."

The psalmist is drawn relentlessly into the swirling vortex of the deep and finds himself far below the ocean's surface in the land of the dead, shut in its confines for ever, 7a;

לְקִצְבֵי הָרִים יָרַדְתִּי הָאָרֶץ בְּרִחֶיהָ
בַּעֲדִי לְעוֹלָם

"I went down to the bases of the mountains; the bars of the underworld closed after me for ever."

קֶצֶב , means "extremity, end" and, in this context, indicates the bases of the great earth mountains, which were sunk in the depths of the world ocean. Presumably the underworld is envisaged here as having a gate of some kind. The representation is that of the suppliant reaching les profondeurs of the ocean and entering the underworld whose gate clangs shut behind him for ever. This representation may be adduced despite the rather difficult grammar, a literal rendering may help the understanding;

"To the ends of the mountains I went down, the earth (underworld), its bars behind me for ever."

The remainder of the psalm deals with thanksgiving for rescue and a promise of praise to Yahweh.

The verses cited depict, with great clarity, the descent to the underworld through the waters of the world ocean with all its attendant terrors. The mythical allusions are clear and are used to describe the psalmist's state as he feels himself within the realm of death.

B Job

Two verses from this book may be drawn into the discussion.

26.5

הרפאים יחוללו מתחת מים ושכניהם

"Before him the shades are made to tremble, beneath the waters and their inhabitants."

There are various interpretations of this verse in the Versions which are listed by Dhorme in this commentary.

Verses 5-11 are absent from the Sahidic text. They are marked with an asterisk in Jerome, who made his translation of Job from the Old Latin revised in accordance with the fifth column of Origen's Hexapla, LXX[58]. They are also marked with an asterisk in the Syrohexaplaric text, i.e. the Syriac translation of the fifth column of the Hexapla.[59] The present text of LXX derives from Theodotion.

The ה of הרפאים is taken as an interrogative particle by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. The versions seem to have understood רפאים as referring to the "great men of old, the giants," rather than the dwellers in the underworld.

Aquila has the transliteration Ραφαείμ .

Symmachus has θεομάχοι (lit. "fighters against God").

Theodotion has γίγαντες (giants).

Jerome and the Vulgate have gigantes (giants).

However, the reference to "beneath the waters" in this verse makes it plain that הרפאים means the community of the dead in the underworld. This is supported by the reference to Sheol and Abaddon in the next verse. Tur-Sinai says that the shades may be

those of the dead heroes and mighty men of old.[60]

יחוללו poses something of a problem. Commentators have supposed that the metre of 5a is defective and that the parallelism is imperfect. Driver takes it as a po lel of יחילו , "they are made to tremble." Then he moves the athnach thus from יחוללו׃ to תחת מים , putting the latter word in the first hemistich and obtaining a reasonable 3:2 metre sic,

"The shades do tremble beneath,
The waters and their inhabitants."[61]

Dhorme accepts the suggestion for יחוללו , but wishes to improve the parallelism further by adding the verb ויחרדו׃ , "become terrified," to the second hemistich. This, or some such verb, he asserts, has vanished by haplography after מתחת . His suggestion would make the verse indicate that the shades trembled "beneath" (i.e. in the underworld) and that the waters and their inhabitants were terrified. He also says that "beneath the waters and their inhabitants," is a strange indication for the dwelling-place of the shades.[62] This is not the case, for the underworld lay in the depths of the cosmic ocean.

It seems much easier to suggest that some such word as מלפניו , "before him, i.e. Yahweh," is missing from the first hemistich, through haplography before מתחת . Verse 6 has in the first hemistich ערום שאול נגדו , "Sheol is naked before him," and therefore it seems reasonable to assume an original מלפניו in verse 5.

The picture drawn by this verse is that of the underworld, inhabited by the shades who are made to tremble before God, lying in the depths of

the ocean which teems with aquatic life, fish and sea-monsters. The shades tremble because their domain is naked before God, v.6;

ערום שאול נגדו ואין כסות לאבדון

"Sheol is naked before him and Abaddon has no covering."

Even the murky depths of the underworld are open to the searing gaze of God, in the same manner as the rays of the Babylonian Shamash penetrated to the depths of the apsū.

38.16

הבאת עד נבכי־ים ובחקר תהום התהלכת

"Have you entered the springs of the sea, or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?"

Like the previous verse (26.5) this must be considered with the verse which immediately follows it.[63]

נִבְכֵי , is a hapax legomenon in the Old Testament, but it is probably to be restored to Proverbs 8.24. BH notes that others read נִבְעֵי , "springs," from נבע , "to bubble or burst out." However, on the analogy of the Ugaritic nbk, "a well," נִבְכֵי should be retained and taken as the plural construct of נֵבֶךְ "a spring or fountain." It is also found with the prefix מ in מִבְּכֵי , Job 28.11, for which there is an Ugaritic parallel, mbk, "a source."[64] The word must designate here the deepest part of the ocean, the wells of the sea.

This chapter (38) begins a series of ironical questions posed by God, designed to make Job feel utterly insignificant in the face of the power of the Almighty. As in 26.5,6 which show the power

of God terrifying the shades and revealing the underworld, the two concepts of water and death are connected; to behold the gates of the underworld one must first pass through the ocean and walk in the recesses of the תהום .

28.12-28 contains a hymn to wisdom. Wisdom is not to be found among the living (13), nor in the deep (14) and the powers of the underworld, Abaddon and Death have heard only a rumour of it (22). These three verses embody the traditional representation of the cosmos.

C. Ezekiel

Ezekiel 26.19 illustrates the same concept. Verse 19 must be taken in conjunction with verse 20 in order that the full significance may be brought to light. Verse 20 was dealt with in chapter 2, so I will confine myself to a short résumé of its contents. The chapter relates the fate of Tyre, the island-city. Ezekiel appears to have had an absorbing interest as to whether Tyre would share the same fate as Jerusalem. In point of fact, in 585 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar came from his headquarters at Riblah, on the river Orontes, and began the siege of Tyre which was to last until 573 B.C. It is very probable that the city surrendered on extremely favourable terms for in 29.18, Ezekiel is forced to admit that Nebuchadrezzar derived very little satisfaction from the capitulation of Tyre. The city was a hard nut to crack for the simple reason that she could be supplied from the sea and apparently the Babylonians were unable to mount a continuous and effective naval blockade. 19-21 picture the descent of the city into the underworld.

19 כי כה אמר אדני יהוה בתתי אתך עיר נחרבת כערים אשר לא
נושבו בהעלות עליך את תהום וכסוך המים הרבים

"Thus speaks Yahweh, 'When I make you like a city laid waste, like the cities which are derelict, when I bring the deep over you and many waters cover you .....'"

In this chapter there are four sections;

1. Yahweh decrees the overthrow of Tyre, 2-6
2. The forces of Nebuchadrezzar are to destroy the city 7-14
3. The effects of the disaster on the surrounding nations are considered 15-18.
4. Tyre is envisaged as descending to the nether world.

For בְּהַעֲלֹתִי LXX has ἐν τῷ ἀναγαγεῖν με , "when I will bring up," and Vulgate, et adduxero super te abyssum, "and I will bring up the deep upon you." Syriac and Targum also add the suffix ך . It seems preferable following BH, Cooke and Zimmerli to read בְּהַעֲלוֹתִי , "when I bring up," which corresponds to וְהַעֲלָה , in the first half of the verse.[65] אֲדֹנָי is lacking in the Old Latin and, in spite of the LXX κύριος , κύριος , and the Vulgate Dominus Deus, is best removed as redundant.

As Eichrodt mentions, the two elements of the threatening deep and the descent to the underworld are to be connected,[66] The תְּהוֹם is the primeval deep on which God set a boundary at creation (Gen. 1.6). These two elements are not simply joined together in an artificial manner to provide an effective working out of the threat mentioned in verses 3 and 4, but are two natural parts of the same representation of that part of the cosmos, vis-à-vis the underworld, which is fundamental to Old Testament thought. As in the so-called "Psalm of Jonah" (Jonah 2.2-9) the underworld is located in the deep, surrounded by

the waters of the תהום . Whoever wished to join the company of the dead had first to go down through this ocean and trace a path through its eddies and currents. The connection between the deep and the underworld is very close.

Verse 20 finds the city, now below the ocean, entering the underworld;

והורדתיך את־יורדי בור אל עם עולם והושבתיך
בארץ תחתיות כחרבות מעולם את־יורדי בור למען
לא תשבי ונתתי צבי בארץ חיים

"Then I will make you go down, with those who descend to the Pit, to the people of old and I will make you dwell in the nether world like (cities) long since laid waste, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you will not return or have a place in the land of the living."

The city of Tyre, swallowed up by the deep, passes from the land of the living into the underworld at the bottom of the ocean.

Chapter 27 contains germs of the same concept. This chapter consists of a remarkably fine poem with a somewhat pedantic and, obviously later, prose treatise on merchant shipping over sea and land at the time (vss. 10-25). In the poem, the city of Tyre is envisaged as a beautiful sailing vessel constructed from fir trees of Senir, with a mast made from a cedar of Lebanon, whose decks were pines of Cyprus and whose sails were of Egyptian linen, with awnings of purple. The strongest rowers, the most capable mariners and the most skilful pilots guided the laden vessel through the seas.

But disaster overtook the ship and she was wrecked by a storm and sunk into the deep "with all hands." Seamen, merchants and kings on every coast raised a bitter lament for the wrecked galley. Verse 26 describes the sinking of the ship, "in the heart of the seas,"

בְּמַיִם רַבִּים הֱבִיאוּךָ הַשָּׁטִים אֹתָךְ
רוּחַ הַקָּדִים שְׁבָרֵךְ בִּלֵּב יַמִּים

"Your rowers have brought you into mighty waters. The east wind has wrecked you in the heart of the seas."

הַשָּׁטִים , for this word the Targum suggests, רבניו יתך , "those who plundered you." This would, however, involve alteration of a perfectly comprehensible MT to השסיו אתך , "those who plundered you." Plundering does not seem to be very apposite as there is no mention of "plundering" in the preceding or succeeding verses of the poem. The word is the same as that in verse 8 שָׁטַיִךְ , "rowers."

רוּחַ הַקָּדִים , "the east wind," was regarded as especially dangerous at sea (cf. Psalm 48.8, "By the east wind you did utterly break the ships of Tarshish."). The overall destructive power of the east wind is also referred to in Job 1.19, where the east wind sweeps across the desert and destroys the house where the children of Job are assembled, killing them all.

Tyre, whose wealth came because of her vast sea-power and trading capacity is finally destroyed by the very ocean which had made her great;

27. הוֹנֵךְ וְעִזְבוֹנַיִךְ יִפְּלוּ בִּלֵּב יַמִּים

"Your riches and your merchandise sink in the heart of the seas."

As this verse stands in MT, it is very overloaded, and I have accepted the emendation of Cooke, of which the Hebrew text stands above.[67] The burden of the verse is that the wrecked ship sinks out on the high seas.

The threat of doom in chapter 26 is carried out in this chapter where the imagery of a shipwreck on the high seas is employed. May suggests that behind the phrase מים רבים , "great waters," there is a reminiscence of the primeval cosmic ocean.[68] The key to the understanding of the chapter lies in the phrase בלב ימים , lit., "in the heart of the sea." In order to understand the phrase completely, part of the following chapter (28.1-10) must be taken into consideration. In these verses the ruler of Tyre likens himself to a god, who, like the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, was guilty of hubris. The ruler of Tyre regarded himself as something more than human and considered his impregnable island fortress as inaccessible as the seat of the gods; in verse 2 he says,

אל־אנכי מושב אלהים ישבתי בלב ימים

"I am a god, dwelling in the seat of the gods in the heart of the seas."

In verse 3 he is said to be as wise as Daniel, דניאל , most probably this refers to the king Danel in the Ugaritic texts who was renowned for his wisdom, justice and fair dealing,[69]

" ..... thereupon Danel the Rephaite,
thereat the hero the hrnmy-man
raised himself up, and sat at the entrance of the gate beside the corn-heaps which were on the threshing-floor; he judged the cause of the widow and tried the case of the orphan."

Returning to the phrase בלב ימים in verse 2 it may be asserted that the phrase refers to the island fortress of the king of Tyre, a strong position, surrounded by sea and easy to defend, mighty and splendid as the seat of the gods. In verse 7 Yahweh threatens to bring great and terrible nations against the proud ruler, whom they will thrust down into the Pit;

לשחת יורדוך ומתה מתות חללי בלב ימים

They will bring you down to the Pit and you will die a violent death in the heart of the seas."

Zimmerli[70] says that the two motifs of descent to the underworld and that of the wreck in the heart of the seas cannot, in this case, be combined to present a representation of the underworld in the heart of the seas. This is correct, for the phrase really refers to the location of the island-fortress of Tyre. It is military defeat, not drowning or wreck, which destroys the king of Tyre. His pitiable boasts of his divinity and the impregnability of his fortress are shown for what they are, as his city is destroyed and he is thrust into the underworld.

Retracing our steps to Chapter 27 and the use of the same phrase in connection with the great ship, we discover that בלב ימים is used of the place where the ship is wrecked while she is at sea. The best translation is the English, "on the high seas." In verse 32 בתוך הים, "in the midst of the sea," and in verse 34 במצולת מים, "in deep waters," carry the same meaning. The ship is wrecked far from land out on the high seas. With regard to 26.19 it was observed that the phrase מי תהום רבה bore cosmic connotations of the threatening deep. The idea of death is

also present in this chapter for in 27.29-32, the mariners and pilots go through the rites of mourning for Tyre, they shave their heads, strew dust and ashes upon themselves and make a lament. While it is impossible to say that Tyre, in the guise of the great ship, goes down through the seas to the underworld, we may conclude that the destruction of the ship represents the fall of the city of Tyre. The threatening and destructive power always lurking in the ocean is emphasised. It is able to bring to death and in that sense, is linked with death, though not, in this chapter, as the place where the underworld is located.

The following conclusions may be accepted;

1. In Ezekiel 26.19-21, there is a representation of the world ocean as the place in whose depths the underworld is situated. The city of Tyre must pass through these waters to reach the underworld.

2. In chapter 27 there is the motif of shipwreck on the high seas. Here the ocean is credited with the power of destruction and the ability to bring to death, but it is only in this way that there exists a link between water and death in this chapter.

3. In 28.1-10 צור refers to the island fortress of Tyre, which ironically enough, in the previous chapter had been destroyed by the very waters which the king regards as protective.

D. The Song of Songs

It is generally agreed by most modern commentators that the Song of Songs is a collection of love poems.[71] It contains songs of love's yearning and its consummation, of coquetry and passion, of separation and union, of courtship and marriage.[72]

The section 8.6,7 deals with the great power of love. Verse 6 speaks of love which is strong as death and passion which is as cruel as Sheol.[73] 6c compares love to fire in its intensity and verse 7 indicates that water cannot put out love's fire;

כי עזה כמות אהבה קשה כשאול רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבתיה

מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את־האהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה

"Many waters cannot quench love and rivers cannot drown it."

כבה and שטף carry the sense of quenching and swamping. My supervisor has suggested to me that here we have to do with a metaphor of fire-fighting. If this is so then the link between verses 6 and 7 would lie in the inability of water to douse the flames of passion. This may be so, but I feel that to reduce the verse to a simple metaphor of fire-fighting is somewhat banal, for the two verses really indicate that the powers of death and the destructive ocean, both elements of chaos, cannot dispel the great force of love. Verse 7 implies the destructive power of the ocean and its ability to bring to death. The ocean can be an opponent of the created order. The מים רבים are the chaotic, disorderly, insurgent elements which must be controlled. The נהרות are the unruly currents and eddies of the deep. May says in connection with this verse, "The author may be saying something more penetrating than that love is a fire that cannot be put out by water. The many waters of

the great deep and its rivers cannot extinguish or overcome it."[74] Haller thinks that by water the Totenfluss, "the river of death" is meant.[75] This is reading too much into the verse, but there is no doubt that the destructive power of the ocean as an element of chaos, in some of its aspects, is intended.

E. Psalms

18.5 אפפוני חבלי־מות ונחלי בליעל יבעתוני

"The breakers of death hemmed me in and the devouring torrents terrified me."

BH following 2 Samuel 22.5 and other commentators e.g. Kraus, change חבלי־מות , "cords of death" to משברי־מות , "breakers of death."[76] This stands better in parallel to נחלי בליעל in 5b. חבלי שאול in the following 6a may have caused a copyist, whose eye slipped a line, to insert חבלי before מות in 5a also.

The sea of chaos is the embodiment of the dangerous assailing power of the land of the dead. מות and בליעל are powers which rage in the sphere of Sheol. The suppliant feels that he is being drawn into the underworld through the משברי and the נחלי of the world ocean. Schmidt says that the dead person is envisaged in this verse as passing through the dark waters on his way to the land below.[77] In his need the sufferer is in the clutches of the realm of death.

בליעל is a difficult word. Dahood suggests that it may be derived from בלע , "to swallow." He says that this would appear to be the preferable etymology in view of the prominence

in Canaanite mythology of the engorging capacity of the nether world.[78] Winton Thomas[79] also accepts a derivation from בלע , cf. Arabic baliya, "to swallow." He uses this verse as the point of departure for his discussion of the word. He suggests that as מות and בלי־יעל are parallel the former word should have a similar meaning to the latter, perhaps "abyss." He notes that בלע is used with Sheol as the subject in Proverbs 1.12. If the meaning of "swallower or abyss," is accepted, he says, then all other uses of the word can be satisfactorily explained. From the original sense of "swallower" the word was transferred to a demon or to the devil. Therefore the phrase נחלי בליעל means the "torrents of the devourer/swallower," sic, "devouring torrents."

Verses 8-16 deal with a mighty theophany which culminates effectively in verse 16, where Yahweh blows back the sea to reveal the foundations of the earth;

וירָאוּ אפיקי מים ויגלו מוסדות תבל
מגערתך יהוה מנשמת רוח אפך

"Then the depths of the sea were visible and the foundations of the world revealed; at your rebuke, Yahweh, at the blast of your anger." (lit. nostrils).

2 Samuel 22.16 has ים not מ׳ים and this is more acceptable in the given context.

The terminology in this verse belongs to the Ancient Near Eastern view of the world ocean. It is driven back by Yahweh to reveal the foundations of the world. Gunkel[80] suggests that, in this verse, Yahweh uncovers the underworld so that he may reach down into it, verse 17;

ישלח ממרום יקחני ימשני ממים רבים

"He reaches from a great height and grasps me, he draws me up from the ocean's depths."

The ממים רבים are the waters mentioned in verse 5, the waters which conceal the nether world in their depths, for they are the waters of death. The suppliant is rescued by Yahweh in a rather anthropomorphic manner and taken from the sphere of the underworld.

Psalm 69 also depicts great distress in the terms of a descent to the underworld through the world ocean.

2. הושיעני אלהים כי באו מים עד־נפש

"Deliver me, God, for the waters threaten my life."

The phrase עד־נפש has already been discussed with regard to Jonah 2.6. The two authors, whoever they were, find themselves in similar situations. The waters are the waters of death. In verse 3 the psalmist flounders in the mud and mire in the depths of the ocean;

טבעתי ביון מצולה ואין מעמד
באתי במעמקי־מים ושבלת שטפתני

"I have sunk in deep mud and there is no foothold,
I have reached the depths of the water and the flood has overwhelmed me."

Kraus, here, talks of a "Sheol-like place" in the depths of the floods of chaos.[81] Sheol like the kingdom of the god Mot, appears here as a place of mire and filth. Later, in verse 15, the suppliant asks Yahweh to deliver him;

הַצִּילֵנִי מִטִּיט וְאַל אֶטְבָּעָה אִנָּצְלָה מִשֹּׂנְאָי
וּמִמַּעֲמַקֵּי־מָיִם

"Deliver me from the mud and do not let me sink, raise me from the deep waters."

The text of this verse is overloaded and various emendations have been proposed. Duhm wished to remove מִטִּיט אִנָּצְלָה as he thought they belonged to verse 16 and for מִשֹּׂנְאָי "those who hate me," read מְנַשְּׂאֵנִי, "raising me up."[82] There are no real grounds for his emendation, which is best left aside. Gunkel[83] regarded אִנָּצְלָה as dispensable, trailing after הַצִּילֵנִי. מִשֹּׂנְאָי, he said, was not in tune with the context and altered it to the imperative, נַשֵּׂא אֵנִי, "raise me up." He removed the ? of מִמַּעֲמַקֵּי.

It has been represented to me that אִנָּצְלָה (מִשֹּׂנְאָי) was inserted to accommodate מִשֹּׂנְאָי, i.e., "let me be saved from those who hate me," the phrase interpreting the imagery of the verse. The words may be a later insertion, an explanatory gloss. The suggestion of Kraus,[84] following, in the main Gunkel, is perhaps the best and does least violence to MT. He deletes אִנָּצְלָה as a gloss and alters מִשֹּׂנְאָי to נְשֵׂא אֵנִי; finally, he removes the ? from מִמַּעֲמַקֵּי. This gives better parallelism and the verse reads more easily; the request to be raised from the deep waters follows on from the plea not to be left to sink.

The petition for rescue is continued in 16;

אַל־תִּשְׁטְפֵנִי שִׁבֹּלֶת מָיִם וְאַל תִּבְלָעֵנִי מְצוּלָה
וְאַל־תֶּאְטַר עָלַי בְּאֵר פִּיהָ

"Do not let the flood waters sweep over me, nor the deep swallow me, nor let the Pit close its mouth over me."

The meaning of the verse is clear, the suppliant begs that he may not be swept down through the ocean to the waiting jaws of the Pit. The use of בלע here makes it highly probable that the suggestion of Winton Thomas for בלי עד in 18.5 is accurate.

From these verses we may glean the representation of the world which shows the nether world resting at the bottom of the world ocean.

F. Lamentations

In Lamentations 3.52,53 the motif of the hunt is used to describe the capture and destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

52. צוד צדוני כצפור אויבי חנם

"I have been relentlessly hunted like a bird by those who had no reason to be my enemies."

53. צמתו בבור חיי וידו־אבן בי

"They hurled me alive into the Pit and flung stones upon me."

In the two following verses the motif changes from that of the hunt to that of the descent through the waters to the underworld. This transition is facilitated by the ambivalence of בור in verses 53 and 55, the transition is from the hunting pit to the Pit reached through the waters of death.

54. צפו־מים על־ראשי אמרתי נגזרתי

"Water covered my head, I said, 'I am cut off (my fate is sealed).'"

The destroyed city sinks into water, through the ocean to the country

of the dead, from which it calls to God in verse 55. The life of the city is threatened to the point of death, the waters are the waters of death, as is borne out by 55b;

קראתי שמך יהוה מבור תחתיות

"I addressed you by name, Yahweh, from the depths of the underworld."

The hunting pit has become the underworld. Again the waters of the world ocean are seen as containing the way to the land of the dead.

The verses discussed in this chapter lead to the conclusion that there exists, in the Old Testament, a set of mythological motifs which represent the deceased journeying through the waters of the world ocean, passing its currents and eddies, to arrive finally at the gates of the land of the dead. The evidence adduced at the beginning of this chapter shows that the idea of the kingdom of the dead lying in the depths of the cosmic ocean, or reached by crossing the world river, was by no means unfamiliar in the world of the Ancient Near East.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. H. Bonnet, op.cit., (Reallexicon) p. 536
2. S.G.F. Brandon, Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East, (Manchester, 1963) pp. 17 ff.
3. O. Kaiser, "Die Mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit and Israel," ZAW Beihefte 78 (1959) p. 20 Vignette from the sarcophagus of Sety I on p. 21.
4. Bonnet, op.cit., p. 100
5. Brandon, op.cit., pp. 18 ff.
6. ibid., pp. 45 ff.
7. Bonnet, op.cit., p. 506
8. ibid., p. 536
9. ANET (2) "Spell for not dying a second time (the answer of Atum)." p. 9 21 ff.
10. Kaiser, op.cit., p. 36
11. ANET (2) "The Instruction of King Meri-ka-re," Secn. 131 and Note 49.
12. Kaiser, op.cit., p. 36
13. Erman, op.cit., (The Ancient Egyptians) p. 83
14. Kaiser, op.cit., pp. 38 f
15. Zandee, op.cit., (Death as an Enemy) p. 94 Pyramid Text No. 1525 from Die Altägyptische Pyramidentexte Kurt Sethe; Leipzig, 1908.
16. Barguet, op.cit., (Livre des Morts) p. 39 Chap 1 col. ii 11 ff.
17. ibid., p. 70 chap. 24 col. i 1 ff.
18. ibid., p. 107 chap. 67 col. i 1 ff.
19. ibid., p. 115 chap. 78 col. ii 25
20. Zandee, op.cit., p. 318

21. A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, (Chicago, 1950) p. 3
22. ANET (2) "The Creation Epic," (tr. E.A. Speiser) pp. 60 ff.
23. ibid., Tablet xi 113 ff.
24. ibid., Tablet i 132 ff.
25. BWL "Ludlul" tablet iv (?) p. 59
26. BWL "Hymn to Shamash," 61 f. p. 129
27. BWL "Ludlul" tablet ii 52 f. p. 41
28. BWL "Ludlul" tablet iii 5 f. p. 53
29. BWL "Hymn to Shamash" 37 f. p. 129
30. CAD ii (1965) p. 245
31. BWL "Hymn to Shamash" 171 ff. p. 137
32. Ebeling, op.cit., (Tod und Leben) p. 25
33. Tallqvist, op.cit., (Sumerisch-Akkadische Namen) p. 8.
34. A.J. Wensinck, "The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites," Verhandlung der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen (A-dam, 1919) p. 65
35. Albright, op.cit., (Yahweh and the Gods) p. 109
36. Gray, op.cit., (Legacy) pp. 22 ff.
37. UT p. 178 67:1:1-3
38. Kaiser, op.cit., p. 115
39. UT p. 174 Text 52:30 and p. 379 on the meaning of gp.
40. S. Moscati (ed.), An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages (Wiesbaden, 1964) p. 41
41. K-B p. 1019
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43. For an excellent study of water in all its aspects in the Old Testament see,
P.H. Reymond, "L'eau, sa vie et sa significance dans L'Ancien Testament," Suppl. to VT vi (Leiden, 1958), passim.

44. G.W. Wade, Jonah (WC London, 1925) p. lxxxv of intro.
H.G. Mitchell, J.M. Powis-Smith, J.A. Bewer, Jonah, (ICC Edinburgh, 1912) p. 23
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45. Weiser, op.cit., p. 220, the psalm, he says, is probably a communal thanksgiving.

46. Marti, op.cit., p. 252

47. Wade, op.cit., p. lxxxvi of intro.

48. Marti, op.cit., p. 253
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50. Weiser, op.cit., p. 221
Keller, Jonas (Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament xia; Neuchâtel, 1965) p. 280

51. Wade, op.cit., p. 130

52. Keller, op.cit., p. 278

53. Marti, op.cit., p. 253
Sellin, op.cit., p. 295
Robinson, op.cit., p. 122

54. Weiser, op.cit., p. 193
Keller, op.cit., p. 279

55. Sellin, op.cit., p. 295

56. Mitchell, Smith, Bewer, op.cit., p. 46

57. Dhorme, op.cit., (Job) pp. 370 f.

58. E. Wurthein, The Text of the Old Testament, (tr. Ackroyd) (Oxford, 1957) pp. 64 ff.

59. ibid., pp. 39 f

60. Tur-Sinai, op.cit., (Job) pp. 379 ff.

61. Driver and Gray, op.cit., (Job) pp. 218 ff and p. 178 of the philological notes.

62. Dhorme, op.cit., pp. 370 f.

63. For a discussion of 38.17 see above p.

64. UT p. 441 No. 1597

65. Cooke, op.cit., (Ezekiel) p. 298
Zimmerli, op.cit., (Ezechiel) p. 611

66. Eichrodt, op.cit., (Esekiel) pp. 253 ff.

67. Cooke, op.cit., p. 306

68. H.G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of MAYĪM RABĪM," JBL 74 (1955) pp. 9-21.

69. Aqhat, II v. 3-7 CML p. 53

70. Zimmerli, op.cit., p. 669

71. R. Gordis, The Song of Songs, (New York, 1954) p. 16
M. Haller, Hoheslied, (Handbuch zum A.T., Tübingen, 1940) p. 22 he thinks that the love songs are set in the context of a Tammuz-Ishtar marriage; I am disposed to regard them as purely secular.
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72. Gordis, op.cit., p. 17

73. See chapter 6.

74. May, op.cit., p. 18

75. Haller, op.cit., p. 44

76. Kraus, op.cit., (Psalmen i) p. 138

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80. Gunkel, op.cit., p. 64

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CHAPTER 5

Death the Monster

In the Ras Shamra texts there can be found numerous references to the god of death and the underworld, Mot. This deity was often conceived as a monstrous creature with a gaping throat ready to devour all who came within reach of its rapacious appetite. That Mot was the god of death is amply demonstrated. Philo of Byblos knew of a god, Muth, whom the Phoenicians called "death," and equated with Dis or Pluto.[1] From the texts themselves we learn that Baal, the god of rain and fertility, and Mot, the god of death and sterility, were mortal enemies, owing to their very natures. Mot was not easily overcome and his defeat by Baal only took place after a long struggle;

> "Mot did gather strength, Baal did gather strength; they butted like wild oxen. Mot did gather strength, Baal did gather strength; they bit like serpents.
> Mot did gather strength, Baal did gather strength; they kicked (?) like chargers. Mot fell down, Baal fell down on top (of him)."[2]

The outcome of the struggle is obscure, but in all probability Baal was the victor because Shapash, the sun-goddess, intervenes to point out to Mot that he has little hope of victory and that El, the chief god, will restore Baal to his throne and accomplish the overthrow of Mot.

The domain of Mot was the murky depths of the nether world where he reigned seated upon a throne set in the midst of mire and filth of every kind. Sometimes he was envisaged as having human form, at other times he was regarded as a monster with all-devouring

jaws. Several quotations will illustrate this. The first extract pictures him,

(a) enthroned in his unpleasant nether world domain.

(b) as an all-devouring monster.

"Then of a truth do you set
(your) faces ⟨towards Mot son
of El⟩ within his city;
but the throne on which he sits
(is) deep in mūre and the land of his heritage
(is) filth, and the lackeys
of El keep watch. Come you not
near to Mot son of El
lest he make you
like a sheep in his mouth
(or) you both be carried away like a kid
in his jaws."[3]

The "you" are Gpn-w-Ugr (Vine and Field) the messengers of Baal who carry his challenge to Mot in his underground city. The messengers are warned not to approach the god too closely lest they too become his unwilling victims.

Another passage contains the threat of Mot to Baal, that the latter must descend into his filthy throat;

". . . . . Verily thou must come down
into the throat of Mot son of El, into the miry gorge
of the hero loved of El."[4]

Baal declares that he must enter the gaping jaws of his assailant;

" . . . . . Even as Mot has
jaws reaching to the underworld, lips to heaven
and a tongue to the stars, Baal
will enter his stomach (and) go down into his mouth,
as the olive, the produce of the earth and the fruit
of the trees, is swallowed."[5]

Gpn-w-Ugr depart once more to the underworld that they may carry the submission of Baal to Mot. Mot is credited in this passage with enormous jaws reaching from the underworld (*ars* - the italics represent my own translation) to heaven and a tongue which stretches to the stars. He will, thus, have no difficulty in swallowing up Baal. Mot is also credited with other victims. The sons of Athirat, the Lady of the Sea, while Baal languished in the underworld, attempted, under the aegis of Athtar, the god of springs and pools, to take over the throne of Baal. When he returned he destroyed them and Athtar their leader hastily vacated the throne;

"Baal seized the sons of Athirat;
he smote (them, though) mighty, with a sword,
smote (them, though) resplendent with a mace;
(and) Mot did gape open (that) they might go
right into the underworld."[6]

ymse . l'ars. I prefer to translate, "right into the underworld."

It is abundantly clear that these quotations picture the god of death, Mot, as a monstrous creature with a gaping throat and voracious appetite, devouring all who dared to approach too close.

I have been unable to discover a similar representation in Mesopotamian mythology, which lacks a personified figure of death,[7]

though the underworld abounds in zoomorphic deities and demons, who assume monstrous shape. As far as Egyptian thought is concerned, Zandee has pointed out that in an Ascension Text, the mouth of the earth is opened for the king in order that he may leave the nether world and fly up to join the gods in heaven. It is the mouth of Geb the earth-god which is opened.[8] Further, it is to be observed that the earth-god Geb was often regarded in an unfavourable sense, as he was envisaged as a dread being who held on grimly to whatever he seized.[9] A passage in the "Book of the Dead" relates how the earth god opens his jaws for the deceased;

> "Formula for giving his heart to the deceased in the empire of the dead.
>
> 'The doors of heaven open to me; Geb, the prince of the gods opens his jaws to me; he opens my eyes which were closed."[10]

In the "Instruction of Amen-em-opet," the seventh chapter deals with the evils of ill-gotten gains and we read;

> "If riches are brought to thee by robbery,
> they will not spend the night with thee;
> at daybreak they are not seen in thy house:
> their places may be seen, but they are not.
> The ground has opened its mouth .... that it might
> swallow them up
> and might sink them into the underworld."[11]

It is, however, most improbable that the Old Testament passages owe anything at all to these brief and rather obscure references from Egyptian texts. Their relationship to the material from Ugarit is much closer.

The ancient city of Ugarit reached the height of its development in the Late Bronze Age (c. 1600-1200 B.C.).[12] The myths of Ugarit probably go back to prototypes in the late third millenium B.C. and the Canaanite religion of that time was already, in most essentials, the same as that found at Ugarit.[13] It is a religion which the Old Testament everywhere roundly condemns, as being of a most debased variety. Be that as it may, there are to be found, in the Old Testament, clear references to a representation of Sheol as a monster and these constitute an unmistakable allusion to Mot, the monster, as he is envisaged in several passages from the Ugaritic texts.

1. Isaiah

5.14

לכן הרחיבה שאול נפשה ופערה פיה
לבלי-חק וירד הדרה והמונה ושאנה

"Therefore Sheol has widened its throat and has opened its mouth without restriction and her nobility, her crowd and her throng descend into it."

פער means, "to open wide the mouth."[14] In Ugaritic p'r means, "to give or proclaim a name," but it may also mean to open the mouth wide, as normally happens when one is proclaiming something. Its cognates are the Arabic فغر, "to open the mouth," and Syriac ܦܬܚ, "to open."[15] Driver also notes the meaning of "proclaim" for the word in Ugaritic, but points out that the word in Hebrew signifies opening of the mouth.[16] In this verse פערה is in parallel to הרחיבה, "widen."

This verse relates to a context of threats directed at the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 5.8-23. This threat is levelled at Jerusalem, its nobility and its pleasure-seeking throng. "The bright noisy city goes into the underworld, where only sadness and distress reign."[17]

הַדָּרָה הַמּוֹנָה and הַשְׁאוֹנָה denote groups of people in Jerusalem.

(i) הַדָּרָה - הדר is "ornament, splendour" and this noun is translated by K-B[18] as, "that which is dignified in her." The word appears in Lamentations 1.6 where it indicates the glory of Jerusalem. I take it here as referring to the nobility of the city, the "flower of the city." This interpretation is supported by LXX οἱ ἔνδοξοι ., "those of high repute."

(ii) הַמּוֹנָה - "commotion, agitation." The word appears in 2 Samuel 18.19, 1 Kings 20.13 where it means a great group of people, Isaiah 16.14 where it refers to the great population of Moab, Isaiah 29.4, where it refers to the great numbers of Isaiah's enemies. The LXX translates οἱ μεγάλοι , "the great ones," perhaps better, "her crowd," as far as MT is concerned. LXX really refers in three different ways to the nobility.

(iii) שְׁאוֹנָה , "roar, din." The LXX has οἱ πλούσιοι , "the wealthy." I think rather that the word refers to a howling mob, as the other occurrences of the word in e.g. Isaiah 17.12; Hosea 10.14; Jeremiah 25.31, it means "tumult, din." It most probably refers to the "masses."

These three words are intended to denote three social classes in the city, the nobility, the ~~middle classes~~ common people and the mob. In any

event, what the verse is saying is that the whole of the citizenry of Jerusalem go into the rapacious throat of Sheol.

The most important part of the verse from the point of view of this chapter is that which points to Sheol as a monster with a gaping mouth, swallowing up huge companies of people. It has "widened its throat (נ ש פ), " The evidence for translating שפ as, "throat," is very strong. The Ugaritic nps signifies "throat."

. . . . . l yrt
bnps . bn . ʾelm . mt . bmh
mrt . ydd . ʾel . ġzr

" . . . . . Verily thou must come down
into the throat of Mot son of El, into the miry
gorge of the hero loved of El."[19]

nps, "throat," is parallel to mhmrt, "miry gorge." K-B commenting on שפ cites both the Ugaritic nps and the Akkadian napištu and says, "evidently from שפ to breathe, the throat or gullet opening for breathing purposes." K-B gives the meaning, "throat," for this verse.[20] The resemblance of the verse to the Ugaritic material cited above is remarkable. Both portray monsters with gaping throats into which people descend.

In Isaiah 14.9 (discussed in chapter 2) there may be a reference to the agitation of the monster's ~~inwards~~ belly as the king of Babylon descends to the nether world.

2. Numbers

There is a similar representation in Numbers 16, which deals with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Moses, attempting to arouse the people to trust in him, imposes certain conditions to the effect that, if Korah, Dathan and Abiram die a natural death

then, "you will know that the Lord has not sent me (RSV)." But if the earth opened its mouth and swallowed Korah and his company alive then, "you shall know that these men have despised the Lord (RSV)." The relevant verses are 30-33;

30. ואם־בריאה יברא יהוה ופצתה האדמה את־פיה
ובלעה אתם ואת־כל־אשר להם וירדו חיים
שאולה וידעתם באנשו האלה את־יהוה
31. והי ככלתו לדבר את כל־הדברים האלה ותבקע
האדמה אשר תחתיהם
32. ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אתם ואת־בתיהם
ואת־כל־האדם אשר לקרח ואת־כל הרכוש
33. וירדו הם וכל אשר להם חיים שאולה ותכס
עליהם הארץ ויאבדו מתוך הקהל

30. And if Yahweh creates people and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them[21] and all that they have and they go down to Sheol alive; then you shall know that these men have derided Yahweh.

31. And as he finished speaking all these words, the ground underneath them was cleft open.

32. And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and every man who belonged to Korah and all their possessions.

33. And they and all that they had went down to Sheol alive and the earth shut over them and they perished from among the congregation.

The sons of Athirat[22] met a similar fate at the hands of Baal;

shr mt . yms'e . l'ars

"And Mot did gape open (that) they might go right into the underworld."[23]

mt is a conjectured reading.

shr is somewhat dubious. Driver connects it with the Arabic sāhara, "to lay wide open."[24] Gordon expresses doubts as to the meaning.[25] Gray notes the Arabic word also, but takes it in its secondary meaning of desert.[26] I think that Driver may be right in the given circumstances which point to Mot the monster with the gaping jaws. 'ars I again translate as "underworld." Thus in this Ugaritic passage there is a representation of a group of people sinking into the underworld which awaits them with jaws agape. Further we read of Baal;

. . . . . y'rb

/b'/l . bkbdh . bph . yrd

" . . . . . Baal will enter

his stomach and go down into his mouth."[27]

Baal is devoured by Mot and enters his stomach. We can hardly fail to notice the resemblance. Like both Baal and the sons of Athirat of the Sea, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, together with all their followers sink into the earth which has opened its mouth and swallowed them whole. The translation "underworld" for שאול is suitable in verse 33, "then the underworld closed over them." There can be no doubt that these verses from Numbers 16 contain allusions to the figure of Mot, the monster. Sheol and the underworld close over the rebellious and they are cut off for ever from the congregation of Israel and from

Yahweh. A sojourn in the underworld meant a complete severance of all connection with the land of the living and the lord of the living. It is of interest to note that none of the recent commentators on Numbers have noted these mythological allusions.[28]

3. Jonah

In the "Psalm of Jonah," Jon. 2.3 refers to בטן שאול, "the belly of Sheol." This may be taken to mean that the suppliant, in his distress, feels that he has been devoured by the monster, Sheol, and cries out to be rescued.

4. Proverbs

Proverbs 1. 8-19 deals with the blandishments of a band of robbers who wish to seduce the youth from the paths of virtue by persuading him to join them in highway robbery. They assure him of a fair division of the spoil. In verse 12 they say,

נבלעם כשאול חיים ותמימים כיורדי בור

"Let us swallow them as Sheol swallows life,
in one piece as those who go down to the Pit."[29]

תמימים, indicates the wholeness of the victim and thus the great width of the gullet of Sheol. As in the passage in Numbers the verb בלע, "to swallow" is employed. No opening of the mouth is indicated but it must be assumed that it took place as Sheol "swallows" alive. Again this verse contains traces of the all-devouring monster, Sheol.

2.18, 5.15 and 7.27 all appear in sections warning the youth to beware of the wiles of the "foreign woman." All three verses picture the adulteress and her house as constituting the gateway

to death or the very mouth of Sheol.

2.18

כי שחה אל־מות ביתה ואל־רפאים מעגלתיה

"For her house inclines towards death,
and her tracks towards the shades."[29]

Gemser[30] says that the house of this woman is a dangerous place, an ante-chamber to the realm of death. Whoever visits her enters on the descent of a steep slope where a terrible power draws him below, so that any thought of return is as vain for her victim as it is for the inhabitants of Sheol.

5.5.

רגליה יורדות מות שאול צעדיה תמכו

"Her feet go down to death,
her steps set course for Sheol."

Death and Sheol are the goals of her paths.

7.27

דרכי שאול ביתה ירדות אל־חדרי־מות

"Her house is the road to Sheol,
going down to the halls of death."

The phrase חדרי־מות occurs here only, and seems to indicate that the realm of the dead was envisaged as a vast mansion with many chambers. This echoes a passage in the Ugaritic texts,

'idk . 'al . ttn
pnm . ⟨m bn 'el
mt .⟩tk . qrth

"Then of a truth do you set
(your) faces ⟨towards Mot son of El⟩
within his city."[31]

These verses all contain traces of Canaanite mythology. The woman's house goes down, in effect, to the halls of Mot, the king of the dead; its door is like the open jaws and gaping throat of Mot ready to devour all who reach "the edge of the strand of death" (ʿd . šhl . mt).[32] These references are implicit rather than explicit, for they are completely subordinated to the didactic purpose of the wisdom teacher who warns against any connection whatever with the woman. The general imagery in the passages is the same as that in Numbers, though more sophisticated in the case of Proverbs.

It is almost as though the wisdom teacher were saying, "the house of this woman is like the mouth of Mot, those who go into it perish for ever." He uses these mythological fragments to drive home the point of his homily; these fragments live only within the context of the teaching. The mythological allusion to the mouth of death has been completely transferred to the house of the strange woman.

Two further verses may be added in this context;

27.20

שאול ואבדון לא תשבענה ועיני האדם לא תשבענה

"Sheol and Abaddon are insatiable and a man's eyes are never satisfied."

אבדון is best read, not MT אֲבַדּוֹה .

The verb שבע can only be satisfactorily explained in terms of the enormous appetite of Sheol, who never attains satiety no matter how many victims it devours. Like Sheol are the eyes of a greedy man. The same is true of 30.16;

שאול ועצר רחם ארץ לא שבעה מים ואש
לא אמרה הון

"Sheol, an unopened womb, land short of water and fire which never says, 'Enough'!"

This is taken in connection with 15b which says that there are four things which are never satisfied. This verse, too, has its ultimate basis in the mythological figure of the insatiable Mot.

5. Psalms

In 5.10 the psalmist claims that there is no truth in the mouths of his enemies and that their heart is destruction. We find the following phrase,

קבר־פתוח גרונם

"Their throat is an open grave."

This may allude to the throat of Mot, if it does then the trace is very faint indeed.

69.16

אל־תשטפני שבלת מים ואל־תבלעני מצולה
ואל־תאטר עלי באר פיה

"Do not let the flood waters sweep over me, nor the deep swallow me, nor let the Pit close its mouth over me."

The reference to water is dealt with in the preceding chapter (5). The verb בלע is used again, but this time with מצולה, "the deep," showing, here, that the word really denotes the dwelling-place of the dead. The ocean and the underworld (pit) blend in this verse and it is hard to distinguish between them. The "swallowing" and the "closing of the mouth" must allude to the monster, Sheol,

swallowing its victims, but again the allusion is very faint. The use is literary, the psalmist uses the imagery to indicate deep distress. However, it may be concluded that the ultimate basis of this verse lies in Canaanite mythology.

סגר is a new item of vocabulary in this context and means simply, "to shut;" however, with the preposition על it can bear the sense of "to snap shut," this translation makes for greater effect.

Psalm 141.7, despite the obvious textual difficulties, does refer to death as a monster. The first half of the verse is so corrupt and, in fact, contributes nothing to the discussion, that I intend to deal only with the second half;

נפזרו עצמינו לפי שאול

"Their bones are scattered beside Sheol."

The LXX of this part is διεσκορπίσθη τὰ ὀστὰ ἡμῶν παρὰ τὸν ᾅδην, "our bones have been scattered beside the grave." The LXX use of παρά to translate לפי would appear to take the Hebrew לפי as prepositional, i.e. "beside." Following the emendation in BH taken from some MSS of LXX and the Syr, עצמיהם, "their bones," is read instead of MT, "our bones." This brings the suffix into line with those of the preceding verses which are third person plural. As Kraus says,[33] "Their bones will be strewn beside the mouth of Sheol." He goes on to compare this verse with Numbers 16.32 and Isaiah 5.14. The wicked are seen as devoured by a terrible monster, death, who picks their bones clean of flesh and leaves them scattered around its mouth.

Lutheran propaganda woodcut, 1545: the Pope, as Antichrist, consigned to Hell and enthroned between the jaws of Leviathan. Note the beast's fishy eye.

carving at Conques-en-Rouergue, where Leviathan, whose leonine muzzle is bloated to the semblance of a pig's, stuffs his head through the door to Hell (p. 184). The beast and the entrance are here distinct but their association is obvious.

One of the common motifs of mediaeval and Renaissance Hells was the cauldron in which sinners are boiled; often a devil is depicted dragging a band of souls towards it by means of a chain looped round their reluctant bodies, as on a mid-thirteenth century tympanum at Reims (p. 187). A century later, the cauldron, as a primary image of suffering, was fused with Hell-Mouth, which is turned upside down, with the cauldron rammed into its maw so that it acts as a stove. Almost invariably in such representations the head turns into a lion's, as over the main door of Bourges Cathedral.

opposite Giusto di Menabuoi: *The Last Judgment* (detail), Viboldone Parish Church.

6. Habakkuk

The text of 2.5 is rather corrupt and again only the section relevant for the purpose of this chapter will be examined;

גבר יהיר ולא ינוה אשר הרחיב כשאול
נפשו והוא כמות ולא ישבע

"A proud man who is never satisfied opens his throat as wide as Sheol, and he, like death, is insatiable."

ולא ינוה poses something of a problem. The conjunction ו is best left out as it makes no sense. ינוה means, "he reaches, attains," and is best emended to ינוה , "he is satiated, satisfied."[34] This is supported by ישבע in the next part of the verse. ו in ולא after כמות is also best removed.

The resemblance to Isaiah 5.14 is very great. Sheol is envisaged as opening its throat in both cases. The proud man, in his greed, is like Sheol/death the monster opening his great jaws to receive more and more victims for he, like death, is insatiable.

These verses quoted contain unmistakable traces of the Canaanite mythology of Mot, the god of death, portrayed as a monster with a gaping throat and an insatiable appetite.

In conclusion, it is perhaps of more than passing interest to note that in Byzantine and Mediaeval iconography and art the descent of the wicked into Hell is often protrayed in the form of nude bodies falling into the gaping jaws and throat of a huge monster (see facing page where, however, it is Leviathan who acts as the agent of Hell).

In an icon depicting the Scala Paradisi monks are shown ascending a thirty-rung ladder to heaven (thirty rungs for the thirty vices). They are seduced by various temptations as they ascend. Those who resist all temptations are welcomed by the saints into heaven, while those who succumb fall into the open jaws of a great male human-headed monster.[35]

There are several mediaeval representations of the same theme. Hughes says, "The mouth of Hell is traditionally represented as the mouth of a huge and malevolent beast which dragged sinners into its maw."[36] A sixteenth century German woodcut (see above) shows Antichrist falling into the gaping jaws of a monster. A detail of the "Last Judgement" by Giusto di Menabusi shows sinners and devils in a gaping mouth.[37] A choir-stall panel from Ludlow parish church in England depicts an ale-wife flung into the gaping jaws of a monstrous Hell for watering down ale.[38] The "Harrowing of Hell" by Jerome Cock after Pieter Brueghel (engraving) shows the redeemed pouring out of the jaws of a monster.[39] An interesting sculptured stone representation is the Bocca di Inferno at Bomarzo, built by Pierfrancisco Orsini in the mid-sixteenth century; this is the huge stone mouth of a monster.[40]

Steensma[41] has two representations, one in carving the other in paint, of a similar sort. The first is to be found in the church of Bolsward in East Holland. In a carving on the choir-stalls (houtsnijwerk van de koorbanken) the judged dead pass into the gaping jaws of a monster (muil van een monster). The second is a mural (muurschilderij) from the church of Huizinga, also in East Holland on the same theme.

Finally a rather "demythologised" painting of the fate of Korah, Dathan and Abiram exists[42] on a miniature by Fouquet (c. 1475 A.D.) in which the rebellious group sink into a crack in the earth (no monstrous jaws) while God looks approvingly on from above. Naturally these cannot be cited as direct evidence for the theme of this chapter, but they are of significance nonetheless. A quotation from Hamlet concludes this chapter (Act 1 Sc. iv); Hamlet addresses his father's ghost;

> "O, answer me!
> Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
> why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
> have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre
> wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd
> hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws
> to cast thee up again."

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Haussig, op.cit., (Wörterbuch) p.300
2. Baal III vi 17 ff CML p. 115
3. Baal II viii 10 ff CML p. 103
4. Baal I* i 6 ff. CML p. 103
5. Baal I i 1 ff. CML p. 105
6. Baal III v 1 ff. (for Ugaritic text see p.) CML p.115
7. See chapter 6 following
8. Zandee, op.cit., (Death as an Enemy) p. 8 Ascension Text A.11. a.h.i.
9. ibid., p. 95 Quotation from "Book of the Dead," 26; 89.10-12.
10. Barguet, op.cit., (Livre des Morts) ch. 26 col. i 11; p. 72
11. ANET (2) "The Instruction of Amen-em-opet," ch. 7 16 f. p. 422
12. J. Gray, The Canaanites (London, 1964) p. 17
13. J. Bright, The History of Israel (London, 1960) p. 34
14. BDB p. 822
15. UT p. 469 No. 2078
16. CML p. 163 Note 25
17. K. Marti, Jesaja (Kurzer Handkommentar zum A.T., Tübingen, 1900) p. 57
18. K-B ידד p. 226; ידמון p. 237; שאון p. 936.
19. Baal I* i 7 ff. CML pp. 102 f.
20. K-B p. 626
21. The LXX adds after "swallows them" καὶ τοὺς οἰκοὺς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς σκηνὰς αὐτῶν "and their houses and their dwellings."
22. S.H. Hooke, Middle Eastern Mythology (London, 1963) p. 83

The wife of El and the Lady of the Sea.

Haussig, op.cit., p. 247 dgy rbt atrt ym, "the fishers of Lady Athirat of the Sea."

23. Baal III v. 4 CML pp. 112 f

24. CML p. 150 Note 7

25. UT p. 473 No. 2159

26. Gray, op.cit., (Legacy) p. 72 Note 10

27. Baal I* ii 3 ff. pp. 104 f

28. M. Noth, Das Vierte Buch Mose (Numeri) (DATD, Göttingen, 1966) p. 114

J. Marsh, Numbers (IB, Nashville, 1953) p. 225

29. The translation of these verses from Proverbs is taken from Proverbs (McKane) by kind permission of the author.

30. B. Gemser, Sprüche Salomos (Handkommentar zum A.T., Tübingen, 1963) p. 26

31. Baal II viii 10 ff CML pp. 102 ff

32. Baal I* vi 7 CML pp. 106 f

33. Kraus, op.cit., (Psalmen ii) p. 930

34. Smith, Ward, Bewer, op.cit., (Habakkuk, ICC) pp. 14 f

35. K. Weitzmann, Icons from South Eastern Europe and Sinai (London, 1968) Comment pp. xiii f. of intro. Icon on p. 19; the Scala Paradisi of John Climacus, 11-12th Cent. A.D. Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

36. R. Hughes, Heaven and Hell in Western Art (London, 1968) p. 175

37. ibid., p. 180 taken from the parish church of Viboldone.

38. ibid., p. 185

39. ibid., p. 194

40. ibid., p. 199

41. R. Steensma, Vroomheid in Hout en Steen (Baarn N.V. , 1966) pp. 127 and 151

42. M. Brion (intro.), The Bible in Art (London, 1956) plate No. 123.

Corrigendum.

The Personification of the Powers of the Underworld.

CHAPTER 6

The Personification of Death in the Old Testament

In the thought-world of the Ancient Near East, the doom of death was often represented by the picture of a net which caught the unfortunate victims and bore them off to the underworld. The net was wielded by some demon or by the personified figure of death.

This representation is to be found in Egypt. Chapters 153A and 153B of the pr(t)-m-hrw ("Chapters of the Coming Forth by Day"),[1] usually called the "Book of the Dead," contain instructions intended to help the deceased escape from the net. The terminology employed in these two chapters is derived from hunting. The enemies of the gods are caught like birds or fish in a net, to be thereafter done to death. The net is envisaged as a fishing-net with floats and weights, but it is also intended to catch birds because, as we shall read, it is stretched between heaven and earth. The birds are the spirits of the dead which the net tries to draw down into the realm of the dead, in order that they might not fly away to heaven.[2] The bird-trap locks the dead in the earth so that they may not move. The vignette of chapter 153A may represent a bird-net, while that of 153B represents undoubtedly a fishing-net drawn by three baboons. It is, however, difficult to find the distinction in the written texts. The important part of 153A is as follows:-[3]

"Spell for escaping from the Net:
Words said by N. (the deceased) : '0 One who sees behind himself (this name refers to the ferryman of the barque on which the deceased is borne[4]), who has power over his heart, fisherman who catches for that one who drags to earth and explorer of the earth (both names for

the net), O ye fishers, ye offspring of your fathers (Barguet, leurs pères; Budge,[5] "your own fathers"), catchers of fish who will come to catch fish, you who move about in the midst of the water, do not take me in this net which is the one in which you take the "tired ones" (i.e. the dead), do not trap me in the snare which is yours in which you trap the wandering dead, and whose floats (reach) to heaven and weights to the earth. I have escaped (p. 220) from its framework(?) (Budge suggests "pegs"[6]) and I have rejoiced as much as Henu (Sokaris); I have escaped from its hands and I have appeared in Sobek; I have obtained the possibility of flying towards you, fisher, fowler, of hidden fingers."

There follows a list of names of parts of the net which the deceased claims that he knows. This is important, for to know the names of objects in the ancient orient was to have power over them and, in many cases, also meant obtaining their attributes. Page 220 col. 2,10 continues the theme of the net. By reciting the names of the parts of the net, the deceased has obtained power over it, instead of being potential prey, he has now joined the ranks of the fishers;

> 'I (the deceased) have come, having appeared in Horus, the guide of the country (i.e. the underworld); I have gone down to the earth in the two great boats; it is Horus who has given me (the offerings) in the castle of Horus. I have come as a fisher with the net, my netting needles in my hand; I have come out, I go about, my prey is in my net.'

Chapter 153B has a similar theme of escaping from the net of the fisher and fowler;[7]

"Words said by N. (the deceased): '0 fishers, 0 fowlers,
0 catchers of fish, 0 descendants of their fathers,
do you know that I know the name of the very great net?
The Collector is its name."
.....

The speaker then enumerates all the parts of the net which he knows, signifying his power over it. The chapter concludes with the deceased identifying himself with Osiris, Re (who has emerged from Nun, i.e. the underworld) and Shu (the god of the air). He thus achieves, like Re, resurrection; offerings and life are given to him at the appearance of Re on the eastern horizon. The theme of both these chapters, which come from the Fourth Section of the "Book of the Dead," which part deals with the underworld, is that the deceased escapes from the power of the net by claiming knowledge of its parts and by identifying himself with various gods and thus participating in their powers.

Zandee lists various types of net used by Egyptian fishers and fowlers and also by the demons and other horrifying creatures who lurked in the highways and byways of the nether world ready to ensnare the unwary spirit.[8] The dead man prays, "May I not be caught in the net of Shu."[9] As Shu was god of the air this would seem to indicate a net suspended to catch the souls of the dead as they tried to fly to heaven, in the form of birds. All sorts of snares, nets, gins, traps and boomerangs were used by the unpleasant denizens of the underworld to destroy the spirits of the dead. The dead tried to loose himself from all these and ascend to heaven;

"I am the one who loosens 'bonds' . . . . . I ascend to
heaven among the gods."[10]

It is to be observed that the nets and traps were not operated by a personified figure of death, but by demons and other creatures of the underworld. Sander-Hansen has demonstrated that the individual appearances of Death were personified. Death was envisaged as a robber who overpowered mankind, bound them securely and did not set them free until they had crossed into the underworld; he snatched away mankind, often before their alloted span. Death took away, also the most important parts of the body upon which life depended, the heart and the breath of life. Death was further regarded as a hunter in the desert, who seized living men with a lasso and roped them in. The god of the earth, Geb, was often regarded as a power of death who seized the bodies given to him and refused to allow them to ascend to heaven.[11] Death was also the silencer, who made a silent corpse out of the animated living person.[12]

Death in the form of a robber was a relatively popular concept in Egypt. He snatched men from life and from their relations. Demons of death came and carried off the living to the underworld. It was Death, the unrelenting robber who preyed not only upon the child at its mother's breast, but also upon the aged.[13]

The net was thus used for ensnaring the living, but was also employed in the nether world for the purposes of punishment. It may be concluded that in the Egyptian mythology of death, the representation of the bird or fish net and other hunting appliances, whether operated by Death, monsters, or demons, was used to illustrate the dread power of death which grasped unsuspecting mankind and took them out of this world and provided uncomfortable obstacles to be surmounted in the nether world.

The representation of the net in connection with death is found, to a certain extent, in Mesopotamian mythology. The distress which has seized a man and driven him almost to death is described as:

"a net which has cast me down . . . . . "[14]

The gods were possessors of nets which they could use to bring evil-doers to their deaths. Shamash, the sun-god and god of justice, owned such a net;

"Verily, O Shamash, thy net is the (wide) earth,
Thy snare is the (faraway) sky,
May (the eagle) not escape from thy net,
that evil-doer, Zu, who upholds (evil against his friend)!"

This quotation comes from the myth of Etana, the legendary king of Kish who was carried to heaven on the back of an eagle, the self-same eagle at one point in the tale devoured the offspring of his friend, the serpent, who immediately besought Shamash, the purveyor of justice, to see that the eagle was ensnared in a net for his wickedness.[15] The net of the sun-god was to fall on Zu, the eagle:

"May the snare, the curse of Shamash, overthrow him
and catch him!"[16]

The sin of adultery is punishable by death and the "wide net" of the omniscient Shamash is set to catch the adulterer:

"Spread out is thy wide net (to catch the man),
who has coveted the wife of his comrade . . . . . "[17]

The net is also employed by the denizens of the nether world to compass the destruction of men. For example a demon is described as:

al-lu-ḫap-pu ḫab-bi-lu

"a rapacious snare/net."[18]

alluḫappu is a net used for hunting and warfare. It is employed, as above, in enumerations of demons and diseases to describe their power. It denotes a small trap rather than šuškallu which was of larger dimensions.[19] ḫabbilu (adj.) is used of demons and means, "evil or lawless."[20]

The Anunnaki, the gods of the underworld own a net;

sa-par ^{d}a-nun-na-ki ilāni iq-du-ti

"The net of the Anunnaki gods drags down."[21]

The goddess Mullil, a form of Nin-lil, the wife of Enlil and Lady of the Wind, is described thus,

šuškallu sa-ḫi-ip māt nu-kúr-tim

"Net which casts down the enemy country."[22]

In the "Myth of Ira (a god of pestilence)" the deity in question is credited with a net among his other weapons.[23] He destroys the inhabitants of Babylon, having caught them like birds in his net;

"Each dweller in Babylon, they (were) birds,
you (were) their bird-catcher!
You confined them in the Net, crippled (them),
destroyed (them), O Hero Ira."[24]

A net was also used by Marduk in his struggle against Tiamat and her aides-de-camp;

"The Lord (i.e. Marduk) spread out his net to enfold her!"

Once he had overpowered Tiamat, he turned to ensnare her helpers;

"Tightly encircled they could not escape.
He made them captives and he smashed their weapons,
Thrown into the net, they found themselves ensnared."[25]

Thus the figure of the net may be discovered in Babylonian mythology, though it is not wielded by a personified Death, but by gods, demons and various denizens of the underworld. Indeed, as far as I am able to discover, the personification of death does not occur in Mesopotamian mythology.

In the Ugaritic texts I can find only one reference to a net. The speaker is the Lady Athirat of the Sea,

ʿn . mkṯr . ʾap t⌊ʿn⌋
dgy . rbt . ʾatr⌊t⌋ . ym
qḥ . rṯt . bdk . t⌊šṯ
rbt . ʾl . ydm ⌊
bmdd . ʾel . y⌊m

"Look, cunning workers, moreover do you ⌊look⌋,
two fishers of dame Athirat ⌊of the sea⌋.
Take a net in thy hand, do thou ⌊put⌋
a large one on (thy) two hands
from Yam the beloved of El."[26]

The fishermen alluded to are Qdš-w-Amrr, a compound deity like Ktr-w-Ḫss, referred to in the dual and the singular. What they have to do with the net, rṯt (Heb. רֶשֶׁת) is not clear. It seems, perhaps, that Mot was to be captured to prevent his offering further opposition to Baal.[27] Driver, however, thinks that it is Yam, the sea-god, who is to be captured, as he is causing Baal some trouble.[28] It hardly seems likely that, as Qdš-w-Amrr is to take the net from Yam, the sea-god would give up one of his own nets to be used to ensnare himself. It is probably Mot, who is to be captured.

In the Ugaritic texts, in sharp contrast to the Babylonian material, there is a very definite personification of the figure of death, in the form of Mot, god of the underworld, sometimes portrayed as man, sometimes as monster.[29]

The net occurs in the Old Testament in various places and it is wielded by a variety of people. Before proceeding to an examination of its use by Death the hunter, it is worth mentioning a few of these passages.

In Habakkuk 1.14,15 Yahweh, in the intensity of his destructive judgements against evil nations, is like a fisherman catching fish with a hook and collecting them in a net. There is not the slightest doubt that the widespread representation of the divinity with the net from the Ancient Near East lies behind these two verses:

14. וְתַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם כִּדְגֵי הַיָּם כָּרֶמֶשׂ לֹא־מֹשֵׁל בּוֹ

15a כֻּלּוֹ בְּחַכָּה הֶעֱלָה יְגָרֲרֵהוּ בְּחֶרְמוֹ

"For you make mankind (1 with BH וְתַעֲשׂ הָאָדָם) like the fish of the sea, like crawling things with no ruler. He brings them all up with a hook and drags them with his net."

The חַכָּה (hook) and חֶרֶם (net) are the implements of the fisherman.

A similar figure may be found in Ezekiel 29.3-5 and 32.2-4. In these passages Yahweh threatens to catch Pharaoh with hooks and nets (מִשְׁרָה) and חֶרֶם ch. 32). Pharaoh imagines himself to be a powerful dragon in the sea. There is more than a hint of chaos mythology in those references. The encounter of Marduk and Tiamat in which Marduk trapped Tiamat in his net is transferred to Yahweh and Pharaoh. In Hosea 7.12 Yahweh spreads his net (מִשְׁרָה) to catch Ephraim as she flies like a dove to take refuge with Egypt

and Assyria.

The net is also used by others to bring misfortune and destruction. In Psalm 10.9 the wicked man lurks like a lion in a covert so that he may draw the poor man into his net (רשת). The wicked and their net are also mentioned in Pss. 35.7 (רשתם); 57.7 (רשת); 140.6 (רשת). Yahweh is able to free the suppliant from these nets e.g. Pss. 25.15 and 31.5.

There are certain passages, however, where the net and other instruments of the hunter and trapper are wielded by a personified figure of Death. After these have been dealt with other personifications of death in the Old Testament will be considered.

1. Death the Hunter

In the book of Ecclesiastes there are two references to Death in the form of a hunter.

(a) 7.26

ומוצא אני מר ממות את־ האשה אשר־ היא מצודים
אפורים ידיה
וחרמים לבה/שוב לפני האלהים ימלט ממנה וחוטא
יילכד בה

"And I find more bitter than death, the woman whose heart is hunting nets and dragnets, whose hands are fetters; he who pleases God escapes from her, but the sinner is taken."

חרם is used in the same sense as Hab. 1.15, a dragnet designed for catching fish in large quantities.

מצוד is a hunting net.[30] In Job 19.6 it indicates the net which Yahweh closes around the doomed Job.

Barucq has suggested that the woman referred to in this verse is the "foreign woman" of Wisdom Literature, who appears in chapters 2, 5 and 7 of Proverbs. It is against the wiles of this woman that the admonitions of the wisdom teacher are directed.[31] Life is indeed bitter with this type of woman. Barucq does not draw any further inference from this comparison. However, a closer link may be profitably established with the passages in Proverbs which will help to explain the figures used in this present verse more clearly. In Proverbs the figure of the woman is closely linked with death and the land of the shades; her house sinks down to death and her paths lead to the shades (2.18). Those who visit her never regain the path of life. Her own feet go down to death and Sheol (5.5.) and her house is an antechamber to the halls of death (7.27). Indeed any association with her leads to social and moral death. Thus, this woman is regarded as more bitter than Death. She is, in Ecclesiastes, connected with death, as in Proverbs. She is more bitter than Death the hunter who comes with his snares and traps to lure men to their doom. Death is more lenient than the woman who causes a man to endure a living death. Though this verse is intended to warn against the wiles of the "wicked woman," the reference to death in the guise of a hunter armed with traps and snares, though indirect, is nonetheless quite discernable. Neither Gordis, Hertzberg, Scott nor Galling refer to this fact in their commentaries.[32]

In 9.12 a similar reference is found:

כי גם לא ידע האדם את עתו כדגים שנאחזים
במצודה רעה וכצפרים האחזות בפח כהם יוקשים
בני האדם לעת רעה

"For also a man does not know his time; like fish taken in a wicked net and like birds captured in a bird-trap, like them the sons of man are taken in an evil time."

מצוד, is specifically a snare for trapping birds.[33] Barton says that the similes of fish caught in a net and of birds taken in a fowler's trap make it probable that the time of death is meant.[34] Hertzberg also indicates that the time of death is intended.[35] Aalders says, עת wordt door de meeste verklaarders verstaan van de ure des doods.[36] The representation of the dead in the form of birds and fish entrapped in a net was noted in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead." In Mesopotamian mythology the pest-god Ira caught the inhabitants of Babylon like birds in a net. So too, in this verse, the suddenness of the fate of mankind is emphasised. Death comes swiftly taking men like fish in a net or birds in a fowler's snare. However, the representation of Death the Hunter is not explicit in this verse. All that is said is that men, at death, are like fish in a net or birds in a trap. But from this it may be reasonably inferred that behind this idea of the fate of man lies the conception of Death the Hunter seizing upon unsuspecting mankind and removing them to the underworld.

A similar use of the conception of Death the Hunter to press home the lessons of the wisdom teacher may be found in Proverbs. 13.14 points out that the person who follows the teaching of the wise avoids the snares of death;

תורת חכם מקור חיים לסור ממקשי מות

"A wise man's teaching is as a fountain of life offering escape from the snares of death."

The phrase "snares of death," is almost a representation of Death the Hunter, i.e. "snares of Death." Toy says that מקשי מות are the snares set by death as a fowler or hunter, or snares whose result is death, for their effect is lethal.[37] Gemser says, Der Tod wird als Jäger oder Vogelfänger gedacht.[38] The representation is perfectly clear; he who follows the teaching of the wise will escape from snares which lead to death and again the figure of Death the Hunter may be inferred from the verse.

Similarly 14.27;

יראת יהוה מקור חיים לסור ממקשי מות

"The fear of Yahweh is a fountain of life, offering escape from the snares of death."

The man who amasses wealth by deceit and trickery also falls victim to the traps of the grim huntsman (21.6);

פעל אוצרות בלשון שקר הבל נדף מבקשי מות

"Making wealth with a false tongue is emptiness driven among the snares of death."

With the LXX ὁ ἐνεχῶν θησαυρίσματα , "he who makes treasures," and Vulgate qui congregat thesauros, "he who gathers treasures," it is best to read the participle פֹּעֵל instead of פֹּעַל , the masculine noun, sic "making wealth."

נִדָּף is best left (see McKane pp. 551 f.) for it is the man who makes wealth with a false tongue who is "emptiness driven among the snares of death."

מבקשי מות cannot be correct and probably occurred through metathesis of ב and מ ; therefore במקשי מות "among the snares of death" should be read.

The sense of the verse is that ill-gotten gains are unsubstantial, the man who has them is not anchored firmly in life and is hurled, unresistingly, into the snares of death.

In two psalms the cords and snares of death are mentioned;

18.6 חבלי שאול סבבוני קדמוני מוקשי מות

"The cords of Sheol were round about me, the snares of Death confronted me."

חֶבֶל is a cord, a rope or a type of snare.[39] There exists an Akkadian word habilu(B) which denotes a hunter or trapper. The word is also used as a description of a demon, perhaps "the one who hunts."[40] חבל is thus a word from the realm of hunting and trapping. The distressed author of the psalm feels the cords of Sheol and Death around him dragging him into the sphere of the underworld.

Death and Sheol are in parallel in this verse. They are powers from the underworld, represented here in the guise of hunters, lurking with their implements to trap their unwary prey and bear them away to the underworld.

In Psalm 116.3 we find the following;

אפפוני חבלי-מות ומצרי שאול מצאוני

"The cords of Death bound me, the hunting-nets of Sheol gripped me."

מְצָרֵי שְׁאוֹל lit. "distresses of Sheol," is rather a difficult phrase in the context. From the parallel חבלי it would seem that some sort of hunting appliance is intended.

LXX κίνδυνοι ᾅδου , "dangers of death," is not helpful. K-B and BH both suggest מצדי , "hunting-nets."[44] This would seem to be a satisfactory emendation and it does not involve much alteration of MT; further it secures better parallelism. Death and Sheol are again personified as hunters luring mankind into the realm of death.

In Job 18, Bildad, one of the so-called friends of Job, describes the doom of the evil man in terms of his demise and ultimate removal from the land of the living. There is no direct reference to the death of the wicked man, but the figures of speech employed make it plain that death is meant. Verse 5 says that the light of the wicked is put out, verse 18 that the wicked is "driven from light to darkness and cast out of the world," and verse 19 indicates that the evildoer will have no posterity among his people. Verses 8-10 describe his fate,

8. כי שלח ברשת ברגלין ועל שבכה יתהלך

"He puts his foot into a net and he walks upon a mesh." For the first hemistich LXX has ἐμβέβληται δὲ ὁ πους αὐτοῦ ἐν παγίδι , "for his foot has been caught in a net," thus omitting the ב of ברגלין and reducing the word to the singular in an attempt to make sense of the difficult Hebrew Text. The Vulgate has immisit enim in rete pedes suos, "he put his foot into a net." But both versions render the meaning rather than the literal text.

Dhorme[42] says that no alteration of MT is necessary and cites in support of MT a phrase in Judges 5.15. בעמק שלחה ברגליו but this phrase, as Tur-Sinai has pointed out, refers to Issachar

following Barak into the valley and most probably signifies, "he was sent after him (Barak) into the valley." Tur-Sinai removes the ב of ברגליו and reads the Qal שׁגה, "he puts his feet in a net."[43] Hölscher removes ב also and reads רגלי the singular, following LXX and Syriac; he translates, "his foot is caught in a net."[44] The suggestion of Tur-Sinai seems to make the best of a difficult text. The ב before רגליו could have arisen through dittography (ברשׁת) and שׁבכה can easily be altered to שׁכה .

Dhorme[45] equates שׁבכה with the Arabic šabaka, "to be entwined," and the noun šabakeh, "a net" and suggests that the Hebrew word denotes a net stretched over a pit and then camouflaged in order to trap unwary animals. The word may also mean "latticework."

9. יאחז בעקב פח ישׂחק עליו צמיד

"A gin catches (him) by the heel, a trap closes upon him."

For the phrase אחז בעקב compare Genesis 25.26, where Jacob grasps hold of the heel of Esau during the birth process.

פח, usually the snare of the fowler, in this case would seem rather to mean a type of gin which catches by the heel.[46]

צמיד is rather obscure. Tur-Sinai equates the word with 5.5. and says that it means "famine." צמא normally means, "thirsty,"[47] and thus Tur-Sinai translates it in 5.5. so I cannot see his reasons for translating it as "famine" in this verse.[48] Further it is most improbable that famine would appear in the middle of a list of hunting and trapping appliances. Hölscher makes a much better suggestion when he connects the word with the Arabic damma,

"to bind together,"[49] as it would seem that a sort of net is intended. צמה means a ~~plait of hair~~ face-veil.[50] Thus a woven net may be meant which could be drawn tight round a victim.

10.

טמון בארץ חבלו ומלכדתו עלי נתיב

"A rope is concealed in the earth (to trap him) and a trap lies upon his path."

חבלו, lit. "his rope," i.e. the rope designed to trip him.

מלכדתו is used here as a general term for a trap or snare √לכד.

In the chapters leading up to 18, Job's friends have endeavoured to prove to Job that he must have done something wrong, he must have sinned in some respect, otherwise no calamity would have befallen him. They put forward the viewpoint of orthodox theology; if a man does what is right towards God and his fellows then all things will automatically go well with him. Job replied to their charge with not a little vigour and bitterness, denying emphatically that he had done wrong. In chapter 16 he accuses his friends of being miserable comforters and in chapter 17 he is so weary of the interminable wrangling that he wishes only to die. Bildad begins his reply in chapter 18 and accuses Job of being unaware of the innate wisdom of his (Bildad's) reasoning. He then illustrates the fate of the wicked man, presumably hoping that by doing so he will force Job into an abject confession of guilt.

In verses 5 and 6 he tells Job that the light of the wicked is put out and his dwelling becomes dark, in other words the doom of death comes upon him. His own wicked schemes are instrumental in

his destruction. Verse 13 points out that he is stricken by disease and verse 14 depicts him as dragged from the safety of his tent to face the ruler of the underworld. Bildad goes on to say that the wicked man dies, using a variety of figures; his branches and roots dry up and wither (16) his memory is forgotten (17) and he is driven from the light of life into the darkness of death and forced out of the inhabited world (תֵּבֵל) verse 18. The inhabitants of both east and west are appalled at his ghastly end (20). Finally Bildad concludes with smug satisfaction in verse 21,

> "Surely these are the dwellings of the ungodly, this is the place of the man who does not know God."

The death of the wicked is also described in verses 8-10, examined above. Along the path of his life are strewn all sorts of traps and snares designed to bring him to death. Thus it may be inferred that they were laid by Death the Hunter. This personification is reinforced by the fact that, as we shall see immediately below, other personifications of death appear.

2. <u>The First-born of Death</u>

Job 18.13

יֹאכַל בַּדֵּי עוֹרוֹ יֹאכַל בַּדָּיו בְּכוֹר מָוֶת

> "His skin is eaten by disease and the First-born of Death devours his limbs."

For the first hemistich LXX has βρωθείσαν αὐτοῦ κλῶνες ποδῶν , "let his toes (lit. branches) of his feet be devoured," thus indicating not יֹאכַל , the Qal imperfect, but יֵאָכֵל , the Niphal, "is eaten."

Dhorme following Wright (Job, 1883) suggests that the בַּד of בַּדֶּיהָ is an error for דַּוֶּיהָ, "sickness," from דָּוָה "to be sick;" therefore, with only a slight alteration of the consonantal text, a fairly satisfactory reading can be obtained.

יֹאכַל דַּוֶּי עוֹרוֹ "his skin is eaten by disease."[51]

for בְּכוֹר מָוֶת LXX has κατέδεται δὲ αὐτοῦ τὰ ὡραῖα θάνατος "Death shall consume his beauty," avoiding a translation of בְּכוֹר. The Vulgate reads primogenita mors, "Death the first-born." However, if the verse is set in its mythological background, the meaning becomes clear and supports by parallelism the emendation suggested for the first hemistich.

In Akkadian Nam-ta-ru is the god of plague and pest. He is the vizier of the underworld and also the i-lit-ti ^{d}ereš-ki-gal "the offspring of Ereshkigal," the queen of the underworld.[52] In the world of Mesopotamian deities the first-born, if male, was more often than not the vizier of his father.[53] The first-born was the sukallu, "vizier." Namtar was the sukallu irṣiti, "the vizier of the underworld."[54] As he was also the offspring of Ereshkigal, it is most likely that he was her first-born son. There does exist an Akkadian word bukru (Heb, בְּכוֹר) but it is generally used in the plural and there is no firm indication that it meant a first-born son. It simply meant son and if it was to designate the heir, the first-born, then it was qualified by the word rēštû, "chief, first (son),"[55] But this does not alter the fact that Namtar, the god of plague and vizier of the underworld was more than likely the first-born of Ereshkigal, the bukru rēštû.

Mummu was the first-born of the primordial sweet water deity, Apsū, and his vizier;

"Then Apsū, the begetter of the great gods,
Called Mummu, his vizier, and said to him:"

* *

"Mummu spoke up and counselled Apsû;
(.....) and unfavourable was the advice of his Mummu:
'Yes, my father, destroy (their) disorderly way;"[56]

In Arabic diseases are "daughters of death," and fever is referred to as bint el manīja, "daughter of fate."[57] In this verse, therefore, the בכור מות , "first-born of Death," is the vizier of the god Death who executes his will on mankind, and thus a god of plague and disease, this bearing out the emendation of דֶּבֶר to דַּלֶּקֶת , "sickness," in the first hemistich. The verse is very simply explained against the background of the Ancient Near East, disease and the first-born of death being one and the same figure.

3. Death the "King of Terrors."

Job 18.14

יִנָּתֵק מֵאָהֳלוֹ מִבְטְחוֹ וְתִצְעָדֵהוּ לְמֶלֶךְ בַּלָּהוֹת

"He is torn from the tent where he dwells in security and
they march him to the king of terrors."

Dhorme suggests that מִבְטְחוֹ stands in apposition to מֵאָהֳלוֹ thus, "from his tent, from his safe place," (cf. Isaiah 32,18 where מִבְטָחִים stands in apposition to מִשְׁכְּנוֹת).[58]

However BH suggests מאהל מבטחו , "from the tent where he dwells in security," which is gramatically more satisfactory.

The second person singular תצעדנה is rather difficult to explain. Dhorme explains it by appealing to the second person singular תשכון , "you may dwell" in verse 15. The you who leads the evil man before the king of terrors is the you who will dwell in the vacated tent. This is unconvincing in the extreme. The suggestion in BH to change תצעדנה to יצעדוהו "they make him march" involves the alteration of only one letter and seems a reasonable way out of the problem. The suggestion of Tur-Sinai that מחלה is the subject is most implausible.[59]

צעד has the meaning "march."[60] The evil man is torn from his tent and "they" march him to the King of Terrors. The word "they" should most probably denote the powers of the underworld who have destroyed the wicked man, Death the Hunter and the First-born of Death, who hale him off to the ruler of the underworld. The phrase מלך בלהות undoubtedly refers to the ruler of the nether world. Nergal the king of the nether world in Babylonian mythology was called the bēl a-nu-nati, "lord of terrors."[61] anūnu means, "fear", and was a loan-word from Sumerian.[62]

> "When I lifted up mine eyes, warlike Nergal sat on (his) royal throne, he wore a royal tiara, in his two hands he held two terrifying . . . . . weapons, each (having) two heads . . . . . , from his arms(?) issued lightning; the Anunnaki, the great gods, stood bowed at (his) right (and) at his left . . . The underworld was full of terror; before the prince lay deep si(le)nce(?) . . . . . "[63]

It was by no means uncommon in the world of the Ancient Near East for the deities of death and of the underworld to be fearsome. Their domain was a place filled with terror. Mot, the Canaanite lord of the nether world was often envisaged in the form of a monster. The wicked man, ensnared by Death and carried away by the First-born of Death is marched before the dread ruler of the underworld, in this case probably Nergal.

4. Death the Shepherd

This figure occurs only once in the Old Testament in Psalm 49.15. This psalm deals with the attitude of a man towards his oppressors and in 15a he declares that they are destined to go to Sheol;

כצאן לשאול שתו מות ירעם

"Like a flock they are appointed to Sheol; Death is their shepherd."

Death is the grim herdsman shepherding his flock of humanity to the underworld. I have been unable to find any convincing evidence for this figure outside the Old Testament.

5. Powers of the Underworld

In Proverbs 16.14a there is the following passage;

חמת־מלך מלאכי־מות

"The wrath of the king is Death's two messengers."

(McKane; "A king's anger is a herald of death.")

In Ugaritic mythology messengers are generally paired. The compound names, however, often represent only one person as in the case of Qdš-w-Amrr and Ktr-w-Hss, as Ginsberg has clearly demonstrated.[64]

However, Gpn-w-Ugr (Vine and Field) the messengers of Baal are not one, but two persons. Their compound name is

(a) never alternated with simple Gpn or 'Ugr (as is the case with the other names, i.e. Ktr stands often alone).

(b) never construed with a singular verb, but always with the dual, despite the difficulties of tracing the dual in Ugaritic grammar.[65]

Dahood asserts that in Ugaritic mythology Baal has two messengers Gpn-w-Ugr, but suggests that, in Baal I* ii 16 f,[66] the two messengers mentioned may not be those of Baal but belong to Mot.[67] Ginsberg points out that lines 1-6 (of Baal I* ii) may well be the end of a message delivered by the messengers of Mot to Baal, in the form of a threat.[68] This would make Baal's speech of submission easier to understand and also explain why the messengers are said to return tb' to Mot (Baal I* ii 13). Later on it may be, also, the messengers of Mot who journey to El to tell him that Baal has perished.[69] This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the two messengers say to El;

" . . . . . we two have arrived
from the pleasant tracts of the land of decease,
we two have arrived from the fair tracts of the
edge of the strand
of death . . . . . ."

It is probable that the two messengers have come from Mot.

The Ugaritic text is, however, by no means certain and one must beware of adopting Ugaritic ideas into the Old Testament without question. But it may well be that the practice of sending two

messengers in the Ugaritic texts may allow one to propose a dual rather than a plural, though duals in Hebrew are normally only used with natural parts. In any event the wrath of the king in its deadly effect is like the messengers of death, or the herald of death, who always accomplish their grim mission.

Song of Songs 8.6,7 speak of the great power of love. 6a points out that love is as strong as Death and passion cruel, like Sheol.

כי עזה כמות אהבה קשה כשאול קנאה

"For love is strong, like Death, passion is cruel like Sheol"

מות , according to Ringgren, means the land of the dead as it stands in parallel to Sheol He goes on to say that here there is presumably some sort of allusion to the return of a fertility deity from the underworld, as a result of the love of the goddess.[70] This theory arises because Ringgren, like Haller[71], views the Song of Songs in the cultic context of a Tammuz and Ishtar marriage.

It is not necessary to subscribe to this somewhat dubious cultic theory to explain the allusion to death and Sheol. The simple love-song, for such it is, descants on the power of love. מות and שאול are not names for the underworld, but rather denote powers which function within the sphere of the underworld. They personify Death, who sweeps men off to the underworld from which they can never return.[72] Love is as strong as the powerful figure of Death who hurls men from the land of the living into the underworld; it is as cruel as Sheol which engorges all who come within its reach.

Perhaps here is an allusion to Sheol the Monster. The words do not signify the land of the dead but personifications of death.

It must be noted in this context that מות and שאול may be employed here in a superlative sense, i.e. that love is very strong and passion cruel. This is proposed by Winton Thomas.[73] If this were accepted then the two words would have lost all mythological power. It seems, in the long run, most satisfactory to accept the fact that there are personifications of powers of the underworld used in a literary way to illustrate the great power of love and the relentless cruelty of passion.

More powers of the underworld are mentioned in Hosea 13.14

מיד שאול אפדם ממות אגאלם
אהי דבריך מות אהי קטבך שאול
נחם יסתר מעיני

"Shall I ransom them from the hand of Sheol, shall I redeem them from Death? Where are your plagues Death? Where is your pestilence, Sheol? Compassion is hidden from my eyes."

The grammar and sense of the verse is rather complicated. The first question which must be answered is, are the first two phrases statements or questions? LXX regards them as statements;

ἐκ χειρὸς ᾅδου ῥύσομαι, καὶ ἐκ θανάτου λυτρώσομαι αὐτούς

"I will deliver them out of the hand of Hades and I will redeem them from death."

Vulgate also has statements;

De manu mortis liberabo eos, de morte redimam eos. Ero mors tua, o mors; ero morsus tuus, inferne, consolatio abscondita est ab oculis meis.

"I shall free them from the hand of death, I shall rescue them from death. I will be your death, O death; I will be your bitterness, Hades, comfort is hidden from my eyes."

However, there is no valid reason as to why the two phrases should not be taken as questions which demand the answer "No". This is exegetically convenient, although it would also have been possible to indicate this with the interrogative particle, i.e. אֲ מִידְּךָ and אֲ מִשְׁוָתְךָ .

Mauchline thinks that the key to the verse lies in the last phrase נִחָם מֵעֵינָי , "compassion is hidden from my eyes."[74] Ephraim must pay the penalty for her sins, Yahweh will show no mercy. This interpretation is borne out by the concluding verses of the chapter, 15 and 16, which speak of the disasters which will befall Samaria. Mauchline, like most commentators,[75] following the LXX ὅπου , wishes to alter the difficult אֵי דֶּבְרְךָ , "I will be," to אַיֵּה , "where," which is a possible emendation. The one modern scholar who disapproves of this alteration is Ward,[76] who regards it as a bowdlerising of the text. Certainly the Vulgate has ero (I will be). It seems to me rather that God is requesting Death/Sheol to bring out his plagues and pestilence. Also, nowhere in the Old Testament does God say that he will take upon himself the powers of the underworld. Mauchline takes the two phrases as rhetorical questions and this is very satisfactory.

Robinson and Weiser wish to interpret the verse as a message of comfort.[77] Robinson emends מֵעֵינָי to מֵעֵינָיו , "his eyes," referring to Death and regards 14a as a statement of the saving power of Yahweh. Weiser translates נִחָם as "vengeance." But the primary meaning of the verb נִחָם is "to comfort, console,"[78]

and thus the noun cannot be translated other than by "compassion" or some such word. Against both Weiser and Robinson this interpretation would require the complete separation of verse 14 from its context which carries a clear message of doom. 12-16 are a word of judgement, indeed 16a has,

תאשם שמרון כי מרתה באלהיה

"Samaria must bear her guilt, for she has rebelled against her God."

Therefore, it is highly improbable that verse 14 should break the pattern.

The personification of Death and Sheol, in this verse, may reflect the Babylonian Nergal or the Canaanite Mot, perhaps even the Canaanite god, Reshef, a chthonic deity who was also a god of pestilence. The mythological background is clear but serves only to emphasise the fact that Yahweh is prepared to give Samaria over to the power of death.

The powers of the underworld also appear as partners in an agreement concluded in Isaiah 28.15a and 18a;

כי אמרתם כרתנו ברית את־מות 15a
ועם־שאול עשינו חזה

וכפר בריתכם את־מות וחזותכם את־שאול לא תקום 18a

15a "For you have said, 'We have made a covenant with Death and we have had a vision with Sheol.' "

18a "But your covenant with Death will be invalidated and your vision with Sheol will not be of any use."

The word חזה in 15a normally means "seer" and here it would have to mean "vision" if MT is accepted. K-B suggests that חזה

be read, saying that it means, "the mutual liability of those who are relatives, friends, master and servant, or belonging together in any other way, the solidarity, joint liability."[79] This is all very well but it involves fairly extensive alteration of MT. 18a has חזותך , this also means "vision."

LXX reads διαθήκην and Vulgate pactum, both meaning "covenant," for חזיך and חזותך , possibly on the strength of the parallelism with ברית ; but these are merely attempts to deal with the difficult Hebrew text.

There is clearly some reference to dealings with the powers of the underworld. It seems best, in these circumstances, to leave both חזיך and חזותך and translate "vision" signifying that the powers of the underworld have been consulted as in necromancy; only here there is no question of dabbling with the spirits of the dead, the supreme powers of the underworld Death and Sheol are intended.

כפר lit. "cover" is somewhat difficult in the context of 18a. It has been suggested to me that הֻפַר the Hophal of פרר "to break" should be read. The verb is used in the sense of breaking a covenant.[80]

A covenant of some description has been concluded by the leaders of Israel for political protection. Scott suggests that either the Canaanite Mot or the Egyptian Osiris is meant.[81] There is no evidence for this. If any specific deity is intended, then it is far more likely to be one such as Melqart of Tyre (mlk qrt) who was a chthonic deity.[82] qrt (city) was used of the domain of Mot in the Ugaritic texts.[83] It is impossible, however, to be dogmatic about this.

Death is personified for a covenant was normally made between two parties. The prophet upbraids his fellow-countrymen for not trusting in Yahweh and calls their political manoeuvres "a covenant with Death" and "a vision with Sheol."

In Isaiah 57.9 there may be a muted reference to worship of one of the powers of the underworld.

וַתֵּשְׁרִי לַמֶּלֶךְ בַּשָּׁמֶן וַתַּרְבִּי רְקָחָיִךְ
וַתִּשְׁלְחִי צִירַיִךְ עַד־מֶרְחָק וַתִּשְׁפִּלִי עַד־שְׁאוֹל

"You travelled to the king with oil and you multiplied your unguents; you sent your envoys on distant journeys and went down as deep as Sheol."

Dronkert connects this verse with verse 5 of the same chapter;

הַנִּחָמִים בָּאֵלִים תַּחַת כָּל־עֵץ רַעֲנָן
שֹׁחֲטֵי הַיְלָדִים בַּנְּחָלִים תַּחַת סַעִפֵי הַסְּלָעִים

"Burning with lust among the terebinths, under every green tree, Slaughtering (your) children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks."

This verse, he says, refers to the practice of child-sacrifice to Moloch, who is mentioned under the title "king" in verse 9. Moloch is represented as the god of the underworld.[84] But verse 5 refers rather to fertility rites and there is no mention of Moloch specifically. The children are slaughtered in the course of the fertility celebrations, they are not passed through the fire to Moloch as was the normal practice. Any connection between verses 5 and 9 must lie in the realm of the fertility rites mentioned and not in a spurious link between the rites in verse 5 and מֶלֶךְ in verse 9. מֶלֶךְ is not necessarily Moloch. Dronkert's

evidence is very flimsy at this juncture, there is just not enough support for his theory. Moloch is a very elusive figure, most of the evidence about him coming from the Old Testament itself. The word in 9 probably refers to a god under his title "king". The divinity is possibly a chthonic deity because Sheol is mentioned in the verse. All that can be safely said is there there is mention of rites in connection with some foreign divinity who may have been an underworld deity.

The powers of the nether world are also mentioned in two verses in Job.

27.15

שׁרידו במות יקברו ואלמנתין לא תבכינה

"Those who survive him are buried by Death and their widows do not weep."

The Qere of שְׂרִידָיו lit. "his escapers" should be read, indicating those who survive him.

In the second hemistich LXX has χήρας δὲ αὐτῶν "their widows," pointing to אַלְמְנֹתָיו which would even MT and is to be read.

Verse 14 of the chapter says that famine and the sword await the offspring of the unrighteous man. Dhorme,[85] on this basis makes the point that it is pestilence which is personified in the figure of death. He and Hölscher[86] both indicate that in the El-Amarna letters the Canaanism mûtu denotes pestilence. In Assyrian mûtânu from mûtu, "death," symbolises plague. The triad of sword, famine and pestilence is found together elsewhere, e.g. Jer. 18.21, Deut. 32.23,24.

28.22 אבדון ומות אמרו באזנינו שמענו שמעה

"Abaddon and Death say, we have heard a rumour of it with our ears."

This verse comes from a passage discussing the whereabouts of wisdom: "and wisdom, where is it to be found and where, now, is the place of discernment (v. 12)?"

Verse 13 says that it is not to be found in the land of the living (בארץ החיים) and in 14 the Deep and the Sea deny that they have wisdom in them,

תהום אמר לא בי הוא וים אמר אין עמדי

"The Deep says, it is not in me; the Sea says, it is not in me."

From the land of the living the seeker must proceed to the sea and the deep and receiving a negative answer must pass through the depths of the ocean to the nether world. אבדון and מות powers of the underworld declare that they have heard only the merest whisper of wisdom. The powers of the underworld have sources of knowledge not available to the living, but even they have heard only a rumour of wisdom.

6. Death the Robber

This, the last of the personifications of Death in the Old Testament, occurs only once, in Jeremiah 9.20.

כי עלה מות בחלונינו בא בארמנותינו
להכרית עולל מחוץ בחורים מרחבות

"For Death has come up into our windows, he has entered our

fortifications, to cut off the child from the street and the young men from the squares."

This is Death who robs men of life. There is a non sequitur in this verse, which I and most commentators whom I consulted had not noticed, but which was pointed out to me by my supervisor. If the children and young men are already outside why then is Death represented as coming in through the windows and the palaces. This may be solved in two ways;

i. כי עלה מות may qualify both 20a and 20b; 20b

"For Death has come up (i.e. from the underworld) to cut off ..."

ii. The interpretation may be that Death destroys the children and young menso that the children no longer play on the city streets and the young men do not lounge around the city squares any more.

Scholars have connected this verse with the building of the palace of Baal as related in the Ugaritic texts. In the story the god Baal refuses to allow the craftsman god Ktr-w-Hss to put a lattice window in his palace. Driver suggests that this is because Baal fears that the god Mot will climb through the window and abduct his daughters.[87] Cassuto is also of this opinion.[88]

Ginsberg makes an interesting textual suggestion in connection with ארמנותינו , "our fortified places." He notes that in Ugaritic the word ʾurbt, "lattice" is six times parallel to hln, "window," therefore it might be that MT should be altered to ארבנותינו , "our lattices."[89] However MT "fortified places" is equally satisfactory in that Death is capable of passing through windows to seize his prey and prevent them from ever going out into the city again. It might also be pointed out

that the Ugaritic text is fragmentary at this point and does not refer to Mot by name, indeed in Baal II vi, the adversary of Baal is the sea-god Yam. But it may be that the Ugaritic may be explained from this reference in the Old Testament. Volz says, Der Tod ist hier Person, Erober und Plünderer.[90]

I have endeavoured to show in this chapter that Death is personified in various ways in the Old Testament and that the personifications can be explained in terms of their Ancient Near Eastern background. [I have not dealt with Death as the Enemy par excellence simply because I do not believe that enough evidence exists to point to such a person, and where some scholars have indicated its presence I find that an enemy in human terms fits the context just as well] The use of these personifications is dealt with in the following chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. A.W. Shorter, Copies of the Book PR(T)-M-HRW (Catalogue of Egyptian Religious Papyri in the British Museum; London, 1938) p. v.
2. Zandee, op.cit., (Death as an Enemy) p. 22
3. Barguet, op.cit., (Livre des Morts) Text p. 219 col. 2 and p. 220 cols. 1.2 Vignette to 153a on p. 220.
4. ibid., p. 132 chapter 98
5. Budge, op.cit., (Book of Dead) ii p. 510 line 2
6. ibid., p. 511, line 5
7. Barguet, op.cit., p. 222 col. 1 (Vignette of a net full of fish drawn in by baboons p. 222)
8. Zándee, op.cit., pp. 227 ff
9. ibid., p. 227, Coffin Text III 296 f. (The Egyptian Coffin Texts, ed. de Buck and Gardiner)
10. ibid., p. 234 Coffin Text VI 156-158
11. Sander-Hansen, op.cit., (Der Begriff des Todes) p. 17 and Notes 1-11.
12. ibid., p. 28
13. Zandee, op.cit., pp. 85 ff
14. Ebeling, op.cit., (Tod und Leben) p. 52 A Tammuz Text col. 2 line 10
15. ANET (2) "The Myth of Etana" (tr. E.A. Speiser) pp. 114 ff text p. 116 col. 2 10 ff.
16. ibid., p. 116 col. 2 line 16
17. ibid., p. 388 (ii) line 50 "Hymn to Shamash."
18. Tallqvist, op.cit., (Akkad. Götter) p. 18
19. CAD i (1964) p. 359
20. CAD vi p. 14

21. Tallqvist, op.cit., p. 150 saparu, "a net"

22. ibid., p. 240

23. H. Gressman (ed.), Altorientalische Texte zum A.T. (Berlin) and Leipzig, 1926) pp. 212 ff. "The Myth Lord of All Mankind, of the plague-god Ira."

24. ibid., p. 225 Tablet C col. 2 ref. 33 ff.

25. ANET (2) "Enuma Elish" (tr. E.A. Speiser) p. 67 Tablet 4 lines 95 and 110 ff.

26. Baal II ii 30 ff CML pp. 92 ff.

27. Baal II iii 4 CML p. 95 and Note 2

28. ibid., p. 15

29. See preceding chapter.

30. K-B p. 555

31. A. Barucq Ecclésiaste (Paris, 1968) p. 137

32. R. Gordis, Koheleth, the Man and his World (New York, 1962)
K. Galling, Prediger (Handbuch zum A.T.; Tübingen, 1969)
H.W. Hertzberg, Der Prediger (Kommentar zum A.T.; Gütersloh, 1963)
R.B.Y. Scott, Ecclesiastes (Anchor Bible; New York, 1965)

33. K-B p. 756

34. G.A. Barton, The Book of Ecclesiastes (ICC; Edinburgh, 1908) pp. 164 ff.

35. Hertzberg, op.cit., p. 185

36. N. Ch. Aalders, Het Boek de Prediger (Commentar op het Oude Testament; Kampen, 1948) p. 207

37. C.H. Toy, Proverbs (ICC; Edinburgh, 1899) p. 270

38. B. Gemser, Sprüche Salomos (Handbuch zum A.T.; Tübingen, 1963) p. 62.

39. K-B p. 271

40. CAD vi p. 16

41. K-B p. 555 and p. 558

42. Dhorme, op.cit., (Job) p. 261

43. Tur-Sinai, op.cit., (Job) p. 289

44. Hölscher, op.cit., (Hiob) p. 43

45. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 261

46. ibid., p. 262

47. K-B pp. 806 f.

48. Tur-Sinai, op.cit., p. 289

49. Hölscher, op.cit., p. 45

50. K-B p. 806

51. Dhorme, op.cit., pp. 264 f

52. Tallqvist, op.cit., p. 88

53. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 265

54. See above p. 43

55. CAD ii p. 310

56. Heidel, op.cit., (Babylonian Genesis) p. 19 Tablet I 29 ff. and 47 ff.

57. Hölscher, op.cit., p. 45

58. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 265

59. Tur-Sinai, op.cit., pp. 291 f.

60. K-B p. 809 Ugaritic ṣġd

61. Tallqvist, op.cit., p. 88

62. CAD i (1968) p. 150

63. Heidel, op.cit., (Gilgamesh Epic) pp. 133 f. 11 ff.

64. H.L. Ginsberg, "Baal's two Messengers" BASOR 95 (1944) p. 25

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67. M. Dahood, Proverbs and North-west Semitic Philology (Rome, 1963) p. 36

68. Ginsberg, op.cit., p. 29 Note 20

69. Baal I* vi 1 ff. CML p. 107

70. H. Ringgren, Das Hohe Lied (DATD; Göttingen, 1958) p. 34

71. Haller, op.cit., (Hoheslied) p. 22

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75. J.L. Mays, Hosea (London, 1969) pp. 178 ff.

T.H. Robinson, Hosea (Handbuch zum A.T.; Tübingen, 1964) pp. 51 ff.

A. Weiser, Hosea (DATD; Göttingen, 1956) p. 98. He, however, translates נקם as "vengeance" and proposes that Yahweh will intervene on behalf of the helpless nation; both his translation and interpretation are open to serious question.

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76. J.M. Ward, Hosea (New York, 1966) pp. 220 f.

77. Robinson, op.cit., p. 52

Weiser, op.cit., p. 99

78. K-B pp. 608 f.

79. K-B p. 318

80. ibid., p. 781

81. R.B.Y. Scott, Isaiah (IB) p. 317

82. Albright, op.cit., (Yahweh and the Gods) p. 126 and Note 95

83. Baal II viii 12 qrth(his city) CML p. 102

84. K. Dronkert, De Molochdienst in Het Oude Testament (Leiden, 1953) pp. 109 f.

85. Dhorme, op.cit., p. 394

86. Hölscher, op.cit., p. 67

87. Baal II vi 1 ff. CML p. 99 and Note 6

88. U. Cassuto, "The Palace of Baal" JBL 61 (1942) pp. 51 ff

89. H.L. Ginsberg, "The Ugaritic Texts and Textual Criticism" JBL 62 (1943) p. 114

90. P. Volz, Der Prophet Jeremiah (Kommentar zum A.T.; Leipzig, 1928) p. 119.

CHAPTER 7

THE MYTHOLOGY OF DEATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

All the chapters of this thesis began with a consideration of the background material from the Ancient Near Eastern sources deemed relevant for the special theme of each chapter. The mythology of death in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan was surveyed to serve as a point of departure for an examination of the various passages in the Old Testament which contain references to the mythology of death.

The subject of myth in general in the Ancient Near East is one of vast scope and quite beyond the limits of this work and, therefore, no attempt has been made to say anything about it.[1] However, before proceeding to examine the use of the mythology of death in the Old Testament, it is well to say something about the position of myth within the Old Testament itself.

It is now some seventy-five years since the problem of myth within the Old Testament tradition was first formulated in any detail by Gunkel. He drew attention to mythological elements in the tradition of Israel which could not be explained merely in terms of fortuitous parallelism with other myths of the ancient orient. He saw that much of this mythology could be traced to Babylonian and Assyrian sources,[2] but he set about to examine how the myth had come into the Old Testament and how it had been made to conform to the thought and understanding of Israel. He dealt with such various themes as the Creation, the Flood, Rahab and Leviathan and <u>tehōm</u>.[3] He noted how mythological figures such as the Dragon in the Sea were linked to historical events and personages, e.g. the <u>hubris</u> of the sea-dragon is the <u>hubris</u> of Pharaoh and Egypt in Ezekiel 29 and 32.[4]

He was also at pains to point out that these allusions were fragments of mythology. With regard to Ezekiel, Gunkel asserted that the myth was taken over into history in order to describe the fate of the kingdoms of the world. He also noted the tale of Hēlēl ben Shachar in Isaiah 14 and compared it to the Greek myth of Phaeton, concluding (p. 134) that as a Mesopotamian source was lacking, a Phoenician source must be postulated; a conclusion which seventy-five years of discussion and debate have not substantially altered. He also drew attention to the connection between the ocean and the underworld, and to the use of the figure of sinking through the ocean to the underworld as indicative of deep distress.[5] Finally he demonstrated how a certain degree of artistic freedom was used towards myth by the writers of the Old Testament.[6]

The study of myth in the Old Testament has developed considerably since the days of Gunkel and one simply cannot review or even list all the writers who have grappled with the problem, within the limits prescribed. I wish, however, to review briefly the theories of three modern scholars who have given relatively sound indications as to the place of myth within the framework of the Old Testament.

McKenzie[7] draws attention to the fact that the definition of myth as "fictitious narrative or stories about gods and supernatural beings," is no longer held to be satisfactory in the eyes of modern scholars. He surveys attempts which have been made by the moderns to define myth. He says that the Old Testament makes extensive use of mythical language, imagery and conceptions. It is full of fugitive pieces of mythology drawn from various sources which appear as mythological allusions. The Old Testament often revised existing myths for various purposes e.g. the Deluge myth revised to conform to

the pattern of the judgement and salvation of Yahweh. This aspect of the mythological allusions in the Old Testament is only mentioned in passing by McKenzie, for he is mainly concerned to make the point that myth did exist in the Old Testament in the form of mythopoeic thought, which endeavoured to apprehend a reality or a truth which could be expressed in no other way, for the Hebrews, like their neighbours, had no abstract or discursive thought. However, it is enough for our purpose to note that McKenzie readily admits to the existence of mythological allusions in the tradition of Israel.

Barr has also considered the problem of myth in the Old Testament.[8] Like McKenzie, he is chiefly exercised with the revision of the classical definition of myth in the light of modern study and to apply the results of that revision to the Old Testament. He indicates that myth must always be envisaged as a totality within the cultural group to which it applies, i.e. Ugaritic mythology must be regarded as completely within the culture of Ugarit. Within each culture there exists different layers of myth,and myths differ from one another in their degree of importance. Myth, says Barr, is a striving for a total world-view. It must be regarded as a serious attempt to integrate reality and experience; its goal is the totality of what is significant to man's needs, material, intellectual and spiritual. It informs and inspires the daily business, its forms and patterns changing to comprehend new interests and needs. Mythology is not a pre-scientific attempt to comprehend the cosmos, for it is a direct expression of its subject matter e.g. Tammuz and decaying vegetation <u>were</u> one another; the accession of the pharaoh <u>was</u> Horus succeeding the dead Osiris.

Barr's definition of mythology has been quoted at some length because it represents a clear and concise statement of what mythology is about and avoids the pitfall of the classical definition.

I am not particularly happy about his remark that Tammuz and decaying vegetation were one another. This seems a rather unsophisticated viewpoint and is not the same type of myth as the Horus/Osiris myth. However, his general attempt to express the intention of mythology is clear. It highlights the fact that there is, in the Old Testament tradition, a radical departure from the characteristic Ancient Near Eastern mythical thought in terms of harmony or correspondence, for this pattern was broken in Israel. Again this points to the fact that in the Old Testament fragments of Ancient Near Eastern mythology survive, but they are no longer mythology in the full sense. Barr says that these mythological fragments are under the control of those who use them.

The position adopted by Childs in his book, is in fundamental accord with that of Barr.[9] Unlike Barr and McKenzie, Childs is more interested in what happened to the mythological fragments which found their way into the tradition of Israel. He shows how the Biblical writers approached this material. They dealt with it in various ways depending to a great extent on the degree to which they were able to assimilate or destroy the foreign understanding of the reality carried in the myth. Childs discusses such subjects as creation, the serpent, the tale of the sons of God and the daughters of men, the circumcision of Moses' son by Zipporah, the vision of paradise in Isaiah 11 and the tale of Hēlēl ben Shachar. The foreign material was assimilated and the Old Testament understanding of reality destroyed the mythological understanding of reality in the texts. Childs demonstrates that a struggle took place at the point where the mythological material entered the native traditions of Israel. Basically this struggle arose, according to Childs, because two opposing ideas of reality confronted one another. He asserts that the

assimilation process was effected only gradually and in varying degrees. At times the biblical writer was in complete control of his material, but at other times the resistance inherent within the myth continued to struggle against its new environment. I am not sure that I agree entirely with this as it seems to me that the biblical writers were in complete control all of the time, but excised or left as much of the mythological fragments as were necessary for their purpose. Childs goes on to say that the Old Testament made use of the broken mythology to perform a service within its own compass of witness. The role of the broken myth in the Old Testament is not uniform; it was left in certain passages to obtain a calculated tension, it illustrated active opposition to the purpose of God, it served in a historicised form as a saga with the Old Testament Heilsgeschichte and finally it was used as an extended figure of speech.[10] Again the reference to illustrating active opposition to the purpose of God is obscure and Childs gives little indication of how this is to be understood. However, he has dealt fairly exhaustively with the treatment of certain fragments from well-known sectors of mythology giving an indication of how they should be treated within the Old Testament tradition.

Very little, however, has been written dealing with the mythology of death in this context. This thesis is an attempt to provide a complete examination of such mythological allusions. The selected passages have been examined exegetically and it now remains to say something about their treatment in the Old Testament.

Nothing further will be said about the practices of necromancy and offerings to the dead, for while they tell us something of the attitude of Israelite tradition to the world of the dead, they are not strictly "mythological allusions," but remnants of pagan practices

which continued to exist within the community of Israel, though shorn in most respects of their polytheistic significance. For example, customs of mourning common to the Ancient Near East as a whole were retained in Israel, but merely as expressions of grief.

Childs' categories for the assimilation of mythological material are applicable with respect to the mythology of death in the Old Testament. In the majority of cases the foreign mythological comprehension of reality is wholly destroyed, but in several instances, especially in the Psalms, enough of the original significance of the mythological material remains to create a tension which establishes an antithesis between the spheres of death and life.

Psalms

[Under this heading are included Isaiah 38.10-20 and Jonah 2.2-9].

It has long been recognised that the use of the imagery of death and the underworld to express deep distress or mortal sickness in psalms of lamentation and thanksgiving existed in the Old Testament. Similar imagery was employed in Mesopotamia for the same purpose in prayers of lamentation and thanksgiving. This is a good place to emphasise that while I have dealt with mythological allusions in the Old Testament, it would be unjust to regard the Ancient Near Eastern approach to its own mythology as crude and unsophisticated; it merely possessed a different understanding of reality from the Old Testament.

In the Babylonian Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi, when the suppliant is restored to health and vigour by Marduk, he expresses his deliverance in terms of a rescue from the pit, from destruction and from the hubur, the river of the underworld.[11] In an Old Babylonian petition to any god for peace of mind the suppliant prays;

"My lord, do not abandon your servant,
Grasp my hand, I lie in a watery morass,
Turn my neglect to good."[12]

A hymn with an appended prayer to the god Nabu of Borsippa depicts the suppliant in very deep water;

"He is thrown into the raging flood, the current .....
the bank is far from him, the dry land far removed."

In the same prayer the author begs that he be removed from the slimy morass into which he had sunk.[13]

In a psalm of lamentation from an inscription of Assurbanipal the king claims that he has come into the sphere of death and he prays for salvation.[14]

Widengren has noted many parallel passages in Akkadian and Hebrew psalms of lamentation which express distress in terms of death and the underworld;

". . . . . he beareth punishment, he
is clothed with fetters,
the 'dark of face' have seized
him and brought him to
the place of judgement.
At the gate of retribution
are his hands bound."[15]

The suppliant feels like a dead man dragged to the underworld by demons. Again, the suppliant in another passage finds himself like the author of the "Psalm of Jonah," in the ocean where the underworld lies;

"He is thrown among the billows of the flood,
the deluge has mounted over him.
The shore is far off from him,
out of his reach is the dry land,
he has perished in a deep place,
upon a reef is he caught;
he stands in a morass, he is fast in the mud."[16]

That which threatened life came from the realm of death into which the sufferer felt himself inexorably drawn.

In the preceding examination of portions of various psalms in the Old Testament we have seen how the individual described his plight. The suffering man felt that he was already in the underworld. He had passed through the ocean to the land whose gates had closed upon him for ever; the land of dust, forgetfulness and forgottenness, silence, monotony, loneliness and sleep. He was cut off from Yahweh, whom he could no longer remember and who had forgotten him. From this plight the psalmist declares himself rescued in psalms of thanksgiving. Distress of any kind was envisaged as a sort of death.

As C. Barth[17] has convincingly argued, neither in the Ancient Near East, nor in Israel, must the imagery of death be interpreted simply as lively pictorial representation or as mere figurative, hyperbolic or poetic language. Death was a dynamic power actively hostile to life. This line of interpretation was first proposed by Pedersen[18] who indicated that the individual, in his need, felt himself to be really in the underworld, far from life; the unhappy man felt the darkness of the grave already round about him. The realm of death was the home of evil, for nothing good could come from it. The underworld existed wherever the power of death was felt

encroaching on life, limiting its fulness and its possibilities. Barth[19] points out that sickness, imprisonment, persecution, ill-luck, poverty and sin were considered to be powers emanating from the sphere of death. Death was to be found in the three non-worlds (Pedersen, p. 464) of the grave, the ocean and the desert.

It is, of course, necessary that two points be clearly understood.

1. The individual in these psalms was not in the real land of the dead for that was the land from which there was no possibility of a return.

2. The "death" which is referred to in these psalms is premature, it is not the death which comes at the end of a long life and is accepted rather than feared.

But the individual in his need, had really experienced the disintegrating and destroying power of death and the grim reality of the underworld, for he had undergone a sharp curtailment of his power to enjoy a full life. To this extent he had become "like the dead,"[20] but, unlike the dead, he had the possibility of a return to fullness of life.

Thus the fragments of the mythology of death scattered throughout the psalms of lamentation and thanksgiving are not mere products of fertile poetic imagination, but they have been inserted with a definite purpose in mind. While their use and their content can easily be paralleled in the literature of the wider Semitic world, they no longer bear a polytheistic comprehension of the reality of death and the underworld. Their use is austere and well-controlled compared to the over-loaded descriptions of the realm of death in other sources; they point simply to a deep, dark, dusty, lonely and forgotten underworld. Though they are shorn of any reference to either gods

or demons or ghosts of the underworld, they have retained enough mythological force to point to the evil inherent in the realm of death which could, and did, reach into the heart of the land of the living. The allusions have not become wholly devoid of mythological significance. It is not that they struggle against the Old Testament environment, rather they describe a reality of whose existence the Old Testament was very conscious, the reality of the world of death which provided opposition to the world of life. Even within the understanding of Israel death was a dread power which brought much evil in its train. The allusions derive their power from the reality which they describe and which was felt by any man whose life was curtailed in any way.

Death is personified as a monster in Psalms 5.10; 69.14; 141.7, as a hunter in 18.6; 116.3, and once as a shepherd in 49.5. These personifications have no primary mythological significance and serve as illustrations of the cruelty of death.

Wisdom

(a) Job

The tale of the misfortunes of Job and his eventual restoration to prosperity and health is well-known in its general outlines. The theological problem with which the author attempts to grapple is not our concern here.[21] As Gordis has pointed out, the action of the book is raised above the limitations of national loyalties and ethnic religion.[22] The author of Job has given his work a highly international character in keeping with the general trend of wisdom literature. Therefore it is by no means surprising to find that the sections which contain the allusions to the mythology of death bear a relatively close resemblance to Mesopotamian counterparts, though it is highly improbable that these were acquired by direct borrowing.

In chapter 3, Job laments his unhappy doom, cursing the day of his birth. If he were dead, he says, his lot would be infinitely preferable for then he would be in Sheol where all men are made equal and rest in peace. Verses 13-19 contain a catalogue of the dwellers in the underworld, from kings down to prisoners and slaves; all are at ease in death. As was observed above, these verses resemble a passage in the "Epic of Gilgamesh," which tells how the house of dust (the underworld) contains kings and commoners, high priests and humble temple acolytes.[23]

The parallel is easily drawn, but the two passages function in entirely different ways. The mythological allusion has become in Job nothing more than an extended figure of speech designed to heighten the contrast between the peace of the grave and Job's troubled existence in life.

7.8-10 illustrate the irrevocability of the descent to Sheol, "like a cloud . . . . . so is the man who does down to Sheol." 10.21,22 speak of the darkness and the lack of order in the underworld, and here, in contrast to the two passages above which emphasised the peace of death, these two verses hint at the brooding chaos which lay behind the underworld. Darkness was a feature of the underworld in the mythologies of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan. It represents the terrifying evil which existed in the realm of death and, in these two verses from Job enough mythological potency remains to provide the tension between the land of the life and light, where Job might still have hope, and the chaotic and gloomy conditions of the world of death to which he must eventually go.

16.22 indicates that the path to the underworld is one way only, there is no hope of a return. In chapter 17 Job, in utter misery, asserts that his life-span has outlasted his hopes and that he has

already (vss. 13-16) spread out his couch in the underworld. He has made his home in Sheol, called the Pit his father and the worms, his mother and sister, for his hopes go down with him to the underworld.

In chapter 18, Bildad, one of the three friends of Job, depicts the end of the wicked man, which is death. He employs various figures to describe this doom. The wicked man walks into traps and snares, nets and ropes, which lie across his path. As death is intended it may be reasonably inferred that the traps and other hunting appliances are laid by the personified Death the Hunter to ensnare his victim, in this case the wicked man. The figure of Death the Hunter is only implied. The same may be said of the "First-born of Death," and the "King of Terrors," who appear in verses 13 and 14 respectively. They owe their ultimate origin to the two Mesopotamian underworld divinities, Namtar, the god of plague and vizier of the nether world and Nergal, the king of the underworld.

25.5,6 locate the nether world and its inhabitants, who tremble before God, beneath the waters of the ocean and declare that even Sheol and Abaddon are naked before God. The purpose of this chapter is to stress the omnipotence of God, whom no man can ever hope to comprehend. 30.23 refers to the nether world as the last assembly point of all humanity. 38.17 appears in a set of questions put to Job, designed to make him aware of his insignificance before the might and wisdom of God. In verse 16 God asks him if he has seen the gates of the underworld, which lie in the depths of the sea. This representation of the universe is common to other Ancient Near Eastern sources.

Chapter 28 contains a Hymn to Wisdom, which is not an integral part of the Book of Job. Verse 12 asks where wisdom may be found. It is not in the land of the living (v. 13), nor in the deep (v. 14)

and Abaddon and Death, powers of the underworld, declare that they have heard only the slightest whisper of it (v. 22). Here, too, the land of the dead is depicted in the depths of the ocean.

For the most part in the Book of Job the power of the original mythology of death has completely vanished, for the writer of Job assimilated his material without leaving a trace of its original mythological power. He uses it in a literary manner as figures of speech designed to heighten the arguments in the book, e.g. 3.13-19 is a figure of speech describing the peace of those already dead as it contrasts with the life of the cruelly tormented Job in the land of the living. The possible exception is 10.21,22 where the allusions are designed to point to the darkness and the brooding chaos in the underworld and thus retain something of their original potency. But in all the other cases the allusions have been stripped of their original understanding of reality and they possess only illustrative worth as extended figures of speech; they are wholly moribund mythology used for poetic purposes.

(b) Ecclesiastes

A similar conclusion may be reached with regard to Ecclesiastes. In 7.26 the writer speaks of the woman whose heart is snares and nets and whose hands are fetters; she is more bitter than death itself. The implication is that she, as a relentless huntress, is more bitter than Death the Hunter for she can cause a living death, social and moral.

9.12 points to the fact that men, in the hour of their death, are like fish caught in a net or birds snared in a trap. 9.10 illustrates the monotony of existence in Sheol, where all activities associated with life have ceased for ever. The mythological

personification of Death in 7.26 and 9.12 may only be reasonably inferred. The mythology of death in Ecclesiastes has a literary rather than a primary mythological function.

(c) Song of Songs

In 8.6,7 the strength of love and the cruelty of vehement passion are likened to Death and Sheol, powers of the underworld. Death is strong and Sheol is cruel. It may be that the verse merely indicates that love is very strong and passion very cruel; Death and Sheol being used as superlatives. In verse 7 it is said that the power of love is so great that even the destructive force of the world ocean cannot quell it.

(d) Proverbs

A like interpretation holds for Proverbs, but with the proviso that the mythological references function within a didactic or homiletic context. They serve as illustrations for the teaching which the purveyor of wisdom deems vital for the education of the young man in the ways of the world.[34]

In chapter 1 the young man is tempted by a group of criminals to leave the right path and to pursue easily-obtained but ill-gotten gains. In verse 12, the bandits liken themselves to the underworld (Sheol) which has a gaping throat and swallows its victims whole, without ever satisfying its gargantuan appetite. As was indicated in chapter 5, this allusion clearly derives from the Canaanite god Mot, a monster with a wide gullet and a rapacious appetite. This is an allusion designed to emphasise the fierce and ruthless covetousness of the banditti who wish not only to despoil their prey, but also to engulf them completely, like Sheol.

2.18; 5.5; 7.27; 9.18 all come from passages which discuss the wiles of the ʾiššā zārā, the foreign woman, with whom the young man dare not allow himself to be involved if he is to keep to the path of life. In 2.18 the wisdom teacher warns that the house of this woman sinks down to the underworld and that her paths lead to the land of the dead, where the deceased dwell in their vast community. Further warnings against this woman are issued in the other verses quoted above. The mythological imagery serves to indicate that the price of association with the woman is a high one, it is death, social and moral. It is designed to convey the impression that the woman exercises an evil, inexorable grip, like the grip of death, on those who frequent her dwelling.

13.14 and 14.27 both refer to the"snares of Death," which can be avoided by following the teaching of the wise or fearing Yahweh. In this case also there is probably an ultimate mythological basis in the figure of Death envisaged as a hunter (not necessarily Mot).

27.20 and 30.16 both mention the insatiability of Sheol, two other allusions traceable to Mot.

These allusions are all employed with one purpose in mind, to teach the young man about life. They are employed with homiletic and didactic intent.

Prophecy

(a) Isaiah

In 5.14 we read of how the nobility, the crowd and the throng of Jerusalem go down into the gaping jaws of Sheol. The mythological reference is abundantly clear and needs no re-statement. Isaiah prophesies the doom of Jerusalem in these mythological terms.

14.4-21 is a taunt-song over the fall of the king of Babylon. The monarch is envisaged descending into the nether world, a pale shadow of his former self, greeted in mockery by the kings already there. Verses 12-15 contain traces of the myth of Hēlēl ben Shachar, which the prophet employs to depict the meteoric rise and fall of the king of Babylon. In this passage the prophet combines fragments of the mythology of death with the allusion to the myth of Helel and typical Ancient Near Eastern ideas of death and burial to form a literary composition mocking the fall of the king of Babylon.

In 28,15a and 18a, the prophet refers to a covenant with death and a vision in connection with Sheol which his fellow countrymen have entered into, flaunting their defiance in the face of Yahweh. While there may be some mythological personification intended, some foreign chthonic deity with whom a covenant could be made or an agreement reached, it seems rather that the prophet is castigating his fellows for not putting their trust in Yahweh their God. Their political manoeuvres are a "covenant with death," for their outcome will be fatal.

In Isaiah the mythological allusions carry only illustrative worth and remain plastic in the hands of the author.

(b) Jeremiah

Chapter 9 contains a lamentation because Yahweh has destroyed his recalcitrant people for following the cult of the Baalim. In verse 20 the figure of Death the Robber comes to destroy the youths and the children.

(c) Ezekiel

In chapter 26 the prophet foretells the fall of the island city of Tyre into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon. First, the prophet describes the siege of Tyre in historical terms, with all the panoply of siege-engines, catapults, battering-rams and mining under the city walls. The city, he says, will be plundered and razed to the ground, while all the princes of the sea raise a lamentation for it. From the historical the prophet passes to the mythological, depicting the ruined city passing through the depths of the ocean to the underworld. The mythological material is used to illustrate the impending historical catastrophe.

28.1-10 teems with mythological allusions, representing the Prince of Tyre as a man who would make himself a god, but who is, for his hubris, flung into the underworld. Chapter 31 deals with the Pharaoh of Egypt in a like manner, this time under the guise of a proud cedar. The vain and ambitious tree is eventually cut down by the terrible nations and flung into the underworld. The chapter concludes, "This is Pharaoh and all his company." Finally 32.17-32 contains a lament over Egypt and all its company who go down into the underworld to join other nations already there. Ezekiel prophesies historical calamity in mythological terms, using the material of myth to suit his intentions. The myth is taken into the historical order to describe the collapse of various powers.

(d) The Minor Prophets

Hosea 13.14 reflects the belief that the powers of the underworld are capable of bringing plague and destruction in their train. Habakkuk 2.5 likens the greed of the arrogant man to the insatiable rapacity of Sheol. What has been said above applies in these two instances also.

The only other passage worth noting is Numbers 16.30-33 which relates how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the rebellious Korah, Dathan and Abiram with all their followers, who had turned against Moses. The allusion to the mouth of the underworld serves to intensify the frightful end of those who had mistrusted Yahweh and his servant Moses.

The mythological material underwent a process of assimilation in the Old Testament tradition. At times the writers of the Old Testament allowed some of the mythological potency to remain, especially when it agreed with the Old Testament understanding of reality. This is the case as regards the mythological allusions to death and the underworld in the Psalms, which helped to illustrate the revulsion and horror which the Israelite felt at a premature entry into the sphere of death and into the darkness and dust of Sheol. On the other hand, in wisdom and prophecy the myth is totally devoid of its original power to convey any other understanding of reality than that imposed upon it by the writers of the Old Testament. It has, in the majority of cases, no more than illustrative worth. In the remainder of the Old Testament, almost an entire silence is maintained with regard to death and the underworld.

Thus we are left with the conclusion that all the major passages which contain allusions to death and the underworld have no mythological power and can tell us virtually nothing about the Israelite view of death and the nether world. Demythologisation has taken place and the allusions are moribund, devoid of any potency of their own. Taken out of the totality in which they had formerly existed they have become mere literary vehicles to aid the expression of the Old Testament's comprehension of reality.

Where, then, do we find ourselves at the end of this study? We may say that as the Old Testament positively asserts that death is the end of life, existence in Sheol is in no sense an "after-life," but death. Thus, speculations about the underworld and the beyond were matters of small importance. There was, however, a popular interest in necromancy, though there were many attempts to destroy the practitioners of the black arts. It is enough to say that while official religion condemned it, popular practice, to a great extent, condoned it. For the member of the community of Israel the dead were beyond his interest, for they had ceased to live and to praise Yahweh.

We must not infer from this general silence that the Old Testament was unaware of the power of death. The study of psalms has clearly shown that the power of the realm of death could reach, in a variety of ways, into the heart of the land of the living; death, under various guises, pushed into life and often put it in extreme jeopardy. Sheol was regarded as a spatial realm, one of the non-worlds, which could project itself into the world of life; it had an aggressive side which the allusions in the psalms are intended to express. The personifications of the powers of the underworld serve also to emphasise the aggressiveness of the realm of death. Premature demise was dreaded beyond anything else.

It must be made clear that this thesis deals with what we might term the "classical" Old Testament belief about death. There is no discussion of late developments such as resurrection or a belief in a "Heaven and Hell," Sheol was not, in the early period, a place of punishment for the wicked; all men regardless of rank or moral worth went there. Sheol was not "Hell" contrasted with "Heaven."

It may be said that it was believed that when a person died his body was laid in the grave (in the earliest times in the family tomb) and the shade went to the massed community of the dead in the underworld (or joined the family ghosts according to earlier belief). In Sheol there was no life; neither rank, nor good, nor evil mattered any more. The bitterness of death, and one cannot deny this bitterness, lay in the exclusion of the dead from any contact with the living and with the Lord of life. As von Rad says;[25]

> "Admittedly, Jahweh's sphere of authority in no way ended at the boundaries of the realm of death; but the dead stood outside the cult and its sphere of life. Properly, this was what constituted their being dead. In death there was no proclamation and no praise; the dead stood outside the action of Yahweh in history, and for Israel death's real bitterness lay in this exclusion."

Death at the end of a long and full life, even though it meant a descent to the darkness and loneliness of the underworld, was accepted with resignation, tinged no doubt with some regret at leaving the world of life for the non-world of death, for the men of the Old Testament were only human. Life had been a gift from God to be enjoyed to the full but to be surrendered when the time came. Only when death came early to limit life is fear and horror expressed in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is concerned with this world and not with the world of dead men, whom Yahweh remembered no more. Death was thus an experience, the final experience which stood at the boundary of life. Like every other experience it came from Yahweh, it was part of the created order, subject like everything else to him, but not a concern of Old Testament religion which

functioned within the limits of the historical Yahwistic community. Beyond death lay Sheol, neither good nor evil, simply the final assembly-point of all humanity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. For a detailed discussion of modern definitions of mythology in the Ancient Near East, see the following:-

   M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (New York, 1958)

   H. Frankfort (and others), The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Chicago, 1946)

   G. van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation (London, 1938)

2. H. Gunkel, Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Göttingen, 1895)

3. Gunkel, op.cit., pp. 4 ff

4. ibid., p. 75

5. ibid., p. 89

6. ibid., pp. 53 ff. and p. 104

7. J.L. McKenzie, Myths and Realities (Milwaukee, 1963) pp. 182 ff. "Myth and the Old Testament."

8. J. Barr, "The Meaning of Mythology in Relation to the Old Testament" VT ix (Leiden, 1959) pp. 1 ff.

9. B.S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament (London, 1962) pp. 31 ff.

   Childs refers to -

   C. Hartlich and W. Sachs, Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der Modernen Bibelwissenschaft (Tübingen, 1952)

   Unfortunately this book remains inaccessible to me to date.

10. Childs, op.cit., p. 72

11. BWL p. 59 4 ff.

12. Falkenstein and von Soden, op.cit., (S. und A. Hymnen) p. 228

13. ibid., p. 263

14. ibid., p. 269

15. G. Widengren, The Akkadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents (Uppsala, 1937) p. 118 "He is bound."

While this book is valuable for the listing of parallels between Hebrew and Akkadian psalms, it must be used with extreme caution owing to a tendency on the part of the author to "Akkadianise" the psalms in the Old Testament.

16. ibid., pp. 121 ff. "Sinking into water and morass."

17. C. Barth, op.cit., (Errettung) pp. 13 ff.

18. Pedersen, op.cit., (Israel, i. & ii) pp. 465 ff.

19. Barth, op.cit., pp. 95 ff.

20. ibid., p. 115

21. For a full discussion of the origin and purpose of Job see;
R. Gordis, The Book of God and Man (London, 1966)
N.H. Snaith, The Book of Job (London, 1968)
and all commentaries cited heretofore.

22. Gordis, op.cit., p. 213

23. See above p. 56.

24. McKane, op.cit., (Proverbs) ad. loc.

25. von Rad, op.cit., (Theology) p. 389

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